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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Institutionalization of Remarriage?

(C)

by

Tina L. VanderHeide

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

Department of Sociology

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 1992

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Date 8 APRIL 1992

Abstract

This research study examines Cherlin's hypothesis of the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage and argues that remarriage may be in the process of becoming institutionalized. An institution generally refers to patterns of behavior that serve a function (that is, a social need), are organized around a value, are generally supported by the public, are normative, and enforced through social control. Remarriage is presently an incomplete institution because of a general absence of norms, which results in role ambiguity for remarried family members. As a result, remarried family members rely on an inappropriate nuclear family ideology which does not provide solutions for many of the problems unique to remarried families. This thesis hypothesizes that remarried family members may be in the process of creating norms with which to conduct their everyday lives and that attitudes toward remarried families have become more tolerant.

This hypothesis is tested through a content analysis of popular literature articles published from 1961-1990. The set of hypotheses tested together represent indirect indicators of the process of institutionalization. It was found that the attention paid to remarried families in popular literature has increased; articles have become more instructional; researchers and professionals have been disseminating their findings in popular literature; and that articles have become

more positive in tone over time. These research findings indicate evidence of a social need and that attitudes toward remarried families have become more positive. They also indicate that norms may be in the process of being created, because remarried families are increasingly being provided with advice and information with which to guide their behavior. As such, the findings indirectly indicate that the institutionalization of remarriage may be occurring.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The increases in the divorce rate in Canada since 1968 and in the United States since 1970 have resulted in many changes to the concept and structure of families. Among these changes has been an increase in remarriage and in the number of remarried families. The increase in divorce and remarriage may indicate that changes in the conceptions of the marriage and family institutions are occurring. It appears that for many people, marital satisfaction assumes precedence over marital stability. Consequently, many individuals are willing to exit from unsatisfactory unions. Remarriage also changes the structure of families, from the traditional intact, nuclear family to a binuclear family. New relationships are formed between stepparents and stepchildren, stepsiblings, and other step-kin. The rights and obligations of these incumbents, however, are ill-defined because the family institution has not yet fully adapted to these changes. As a result, remarried family life is incompletely institutionalized.

An institution generally refers to established patterns of normative human behavior that fulfil necessary functions in society (Sirjamaki, 1964:34). Cherlin (1978) believes that many of the complexities associated with remarried family life are due to its incomplete institutionalization. Remarriage is incompletely institutionalized primarily because there is a

general absence of norms, particularly regarding role-appropriate behavior, for remarried family members. He later wrote, however, that remarriage may be in the process of becoming institutionalized (Cherlin, 1981). The purpose of this thesis is to discover whether remarriage may be in the process of becoming institutionalized. An indirect indicator of the process of institutionalization is the amount of media attention given to remarried families. A content analysis of popular literature over a thirty year period is the means by which the main hypothesis is tested. Chapter One begins with a brief description of trends in marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It then defines the different types of remarried families. Next is the literature review, which examines the effects of remarriage upon children, the effects of stepchildren on remarriage, family functioning, deviance in remarried families, and explanations of the higher divorce rate in remarriages.

A. TRENDS

The rising incidence of marital dissolution in North America has renewed a long standing public concern that the institutions of marriage and the family may be disappearing (Jacobson, 1987:257). As a consequence of the liberalization of the Divorce Act in Canada in 1968 and 1986, divorce rates rose from 54.8 in 1968 to 124.2 in 1969, and then to 307.8 in 1989 (Statistics Canada, 1978: Table 11; Statistics Canada,

1991: Table 2). Because most divorces involve children (Furstenberg, 1987:43), many researchers believe that as a result of the rising divorce rate in both Canada and the United States, lone-parent families will become an increasingly prevalent family form. Glick predicted the number of lone-parent households in the United States to increase by one-third between 1981 and 1990 (Glick, 1984:22). The number of lone-parent families in Canada increased by 43.6% between 1971 and 1989 (Statistics Canada, 1990a: Table 5.2), and it is projected that by 1991, lone-parent families will constitute 13.9% of the total number of families (Statistics Canada, 1990b: Table 9). In 1986, divorce and separation accounted for approximately 60% of the lone-parent families in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1990a: Table 5.3). Historically, some researchers believed that children without a stable two-parent family could be at risk for incomplete or ineffective socialization (Burchinal, 1964; Glassner and Navarre, 1965), a belief that Furstenberg et al. (1983:656) report is still widely held.

The increases in the divorce rate and lone-parent families accompany a decrease in the marriage rate. Marriage rates in Canada have steadily decreased, from 8.4 marriages in 1976 to 6.9 in 1986 (Statistics Canada, 1981:124; Statistics Canada, 1989a: Table 2.31). This does not necessarily imply, however, that the institutions of marriage and the family are disappearing. Declining marriage rates are largely accounted

for by two trends. The first is postponement of marriage. While there is an increase in the age at first marriage (Baker, 1984:6), most people eventually marry. In 1990, seventy percent of Canadians aged 18-64 had been married at least once.[1] Second is cohabitation. In 1990, 28% of Canadians had lived or were living in common-law unions.[2] Thirty-seven percent of married Canadians aged 18-29 and 28% of those aged 30-39 lived in a common-law union with their spouse prior to marriage.[3] Cohabitation thus appears to be most often a temporary rather than permanent alternative to marriage.

An even more interesting phenomenon, however, is the rate of remarriage. In 1968, remarriages comprised only 12.3% of all marriages (Statistics Canada, 1978: Table 6), whereas in 1989, they accounted for 32.7% of all marriages in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1989b: Table 5). In the United States, approximately "three-fourths of the ever-divorced men and two-thirds of the ever-divorced women had eventually remarried" (Glick, 1984:24). Similarly, in Canada between 1984 and 1986, 76% of the ever-divorced men and 64% of the ever-divorced women had remarried (Adams and Nagnur, 1988: Table VI). The

---

[1]Early release of 1990 Canadian General Social Survey statistics printed in the Edmonton Journal, Jan. 28, 1991:C2.

[2]Early release of 1990 Canadian General Social Survey statistics printed in the Edmonton Journal, Jan. 28, 1991:C2.

[3]Early release of 1990 Canadian General Social Survey statistics printed in the Edmonton Journal, Jan. 28, 1991:C2.

higher rate of men remarrying is due to men tending to remarry younger women (Giles-Sims, 1987:144), thus "squeezing" older women out of the marriage market. Education, income level, and the number of children are also impediments to remarriage for women. That is, the more educated, the higher the income level, and the more children a woman has, the lower are her chances to remarry (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983:32-33; Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:11-12).

Because of overall high remarriage rates, it appears that for many lone-parent families, the status is temporary. Glick predicted that by 1990, at least 10% of children under the age of eighteen years may be living with their natural mother and a stepfather (Glick, 1984:24). In Canada in 1990, nearly 6% of men and 3% of women had raised stepchildren.[4] The higher percentages for men reflect the fact that women more often have custody of children and are more apt to raise them in a new marriage. High rates of remarriage should thus counteract concerns that the family as an institution is dying. What is instead occurring is a change in the definition of the institutions of marriage and the family that allows for more flexibility in family structure.

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[4]Early release of 1990 Canadian General Social Survey statistics printed in the Edmonton Journal, Jan. 28, 1991:C2.

B. DEFINITION

Remarriages result in various family forms that range in complexity. Hobart defines a remarried family as "a remarried couple, together with their children from current and prior marriages, who are living in the same household" (Hobart, 1988:649). While his definition encompasses both sets of children (his and hers), it accounts neither for remarried families where children exist from a previous marriage but do not reside in the same household as the remarried couple, nor remarried families with joint custody of children. It also does not distinguish between remarried families where either one or both spouses have children from previous marriages, a distinction that differentiates degrees of structural complexity. It is thus useful to supplement Hobart's definition with two qualifications, specifically, whether the remarried family is medium or high in structural complexity. Complexity here refers to the number of relationships as dictated by the presence or absence of children, although complexity is also affected by other variables, such as the age and type of children (for example, biological, adopted, or stepchildren).

The family type lowest in structural complexity is the remarried couple with no children from their previous marriage(s). Remarriages that occur between couples who are childless differ from first-married couples in only a few ways (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:17). Most important is the

fact that at least one of the partners has been previously married. Continuing relationships with an ex-spouse and ex-in-laws, or what Bohannon terms the "divorce chain" (1970:115), can be a source of difficulty for the newly married couple, in that with the former, feelings of resentment and jealousy may occur in the new wife or husband, and with the latter, after divorce, kinship boundaries or obligations are less clearly delineated. The experience of being previously married also provides a baseline from which the remarried spouse(s) can judge the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the second marriage (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1987:434). Perceptions of first and second marriages also differ, because they take place at different points in the individual's life span (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1987:55). For example, remarried persons are often members of two different marriage cohorts, and thus may hold different rules and expectations for behavior (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1987:55). The presence of an ex-spouse may additionally place a temporary financial burden upon the remarried couple if maintenance payments are awarded to the ex-spouse (the financial burden may be permanent if the maintenance payments were awarded prior to the changes in divorce law that reduced alimony or maintenance payments to temporary awards).

Structurally, however, remarried couples differ little from first married couples. It is the presence of children that structurally complicates marital and familial

relationships and exacerbates existing tensions. The absence of children in most cases reduces contact with former spouses, simplifies otherwise ambiguous kin affiliations and obligations, and also permits the newly remarried couple time to strengthen their marital relationship. Specifically for these reasons, remarried couples differ little from first-married couples in structural complexity. They thus rarely attract academic interest except as comparison groups to remarried couples with children on issues such as marital stability and satisfaction (White and Booth, 1985).

Intermediate in complexity are couples in which either or both of the spouses were previously married but only one spouse has children from a previous marriage, and may also have children from the current marriage. Such families will be termed remarried families. Remarried families are of two types: those with resident children (that is, children living with the custodial parent and a stepparent), most often, the mother's (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1987:41); and those with non-resident children, who are usually the progeny from the husband's previous marriage, and who thus reside with their natural mother and perhaps a stepfather. The most complex family form occurs when two previously married individuals who both have children from their previous marriages, remarry. These families will be termed complex remarried families. The complex remarried family comprises the same two types as the remarried family, namely, those with resident and those with

non-resident children.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

Herndon states that demographers project that by the year 2000, remarried families will replace the nuclear family as the predominant family structure in the United States (Herndon, cited in Pill, 1990:186). The number of remarried families has been steadily increasing, but scholarly research on such families has not kept pace (Esses and Campbell, 1984; Ganong and Coleman, 1984). Of the available research, most rests upon a pathological, 'social ill' framework (Ahrons and Wallisch, 1987:228; Furstenberg and Spanier, 1984:440; Esses and Campbell, 1984:416), which researchers label the deficit-family-model or the deficit-comparison (Ganong and Coleman, 1984). The deficit-family model assumes that "nuclear families are 'normal' and deviations from it may engender negative outcomes for family members" (Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal, 1987:69). Researchers who approach remarried families with the deficit-comparison model compare stepchildren to children living in intact nuclear families, "with the expectation that [step]children will be living in a deficit environment" (Ganong and Coleman, 1987:96), that is, an environment that is deleterious to children's social and psychological development. Thus, the primary assumption is that any variations from the nuclear family, such as remarried families, would result in a deficit environment, producing

undesirable effects on children's personality, social behavior, and school success (Ganong and Coleman, 1984; Marotz-Baden et al., 1979).

Effects of Remarriage on Children

As a result of this assumption, a substantial proportion of academic literature searches for negative effects of parental remarriage upon children, particularly on their psychological and social development. Ganong and Coleman (1984) conducted a literature review that examined the effects of remarriage on children's psychological, cognitive, and social development. The research focus was on psychological development of self-image, mental health, and personality characteristics. The results of the research on self-image were conflicting, but most studies found no differences in self-image between children from remarried families and children in nuclear or lone-parent households. Studies that did report lower self-images among stepchildren sampled adolescents or adults and are therefore not comparable to studies that sampled children.

Regarding mental health, indices include psychosomatic complaints, self-reported psychosocial functioning, ratings by interviewers on mental health, and stress. The majority of studies indicate that family type (that is, lone-parent, traditional two-parent, and remarried families) has no significant effect on psychological well-being and social

adaptation (Ganong and Coleman, 1984:399). Some studies, however, report evidence that the presence of stepfathers actually mitigates negative psychosocial effects of father absence by reducing the quantitative amount of paternal deprivation that fatherless children experience (Oshman and Manosevitz, 1976:480). With respect to personality characteristics, researchers found no differences in children of different family structures "on measurements of mood fluctuations, envy and withdrawal reactions, excessive introspection, over-sensitivity to others, and obsessive feelings" (Ganong and Coleman, 1984:400).

Research on the cognitive development of children in remarried families reveals that they do not appear to differ from children in nuclear families (Ganong and Coleman, 1984:400). Some researchers even report that children from remarried families surpass children from single-parent households in terms of school behavior, intellectual achievement, and social development (Pink and Wampler, 1985:328). Chapman concluded that "a stepfather can function to some degree as an effective father surrogate in the child's cognitive development" (1977:1157).

Research on the social development of children from remarried families hypothesizes that they will exhibit more problems in social behavior than children from nuclear families. As Ganong and Coleman report in their literature review of the effects of remarriage on children, the data

suggest that stepchildren do not differ from nuclear family children in most areas of social development, including peer relationships, delinquent behavior and companions, and school behavior (1984:401).

Some researchers believe that remarriage does not mitigate the stressful effects of divorce for children (Furstenberg et al., 1983:661). Instead, they view it as an additional transition that children of divorce must adjust to. Divorce, for most children, involves a drastic reduction in time spent with the non-custodial parent. Furstenberg et al., in a study of the effects of divorce on parent-child contact, report that most non-custodial parents "had seen their children rarely or not at all in the previous year" (Furstenberg, Nord, Peterson, and Zill, 1983:663). Contact decreases even more when one parent, especially the mother, remarries.

Another potential stressor for children, particularly adolescents, of remarried families, is the issue of divided loyalties. Lutz conducted a study in order to determine the Perceived Level of Stress (PLS) among adolescent step-children. The study indicated that the adolescent respondents (aged 12-18) who experienced situations that were potentially stressful more often reported the experiences as "not stressful" than "stressful" (Lutz, 1983:370). Adolescents, however, frequently perceived two issues to be stressful: discipline and divided loyalty. Adolescents reported divided

loyalty to be more stressful than the issue of discipline. It appears that adolescent stepchildren experience feelings of betrayal if they like the stepparent more than the natural parent of the same sex (Lutz, 1983:373).

A few studies examined the relationship between children's age at the time of parental remarriage and their adjustment to remarriage. Generally, most studies find that younger, school- aged children adapt better to the situation than do adolescents (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley 1987b:88; Lutz, 1983:368; Duberman, 1975:58). Ambert and Baker explain that younger children are "more willing to establish an affectionate relationship with the step-parent and more easily [fit] into the reconstituted family" (1984:100). Relationships between adolescents and their stepparents, however, as Hobart hypothesizes, may be characterized by "greater mutual ambivalence" (1987:274). As Duberman reports, accommodation to a new step relationship is more difficult for the older child because "the older child has already adjusted to his or her own parent and is apt to be somewhat set in his ways" (1975:58). Furthermore, adolescence is usually characterized by a period of rebellion, whether against natural or step-parents (Duberman, 1975:88).

Researchers assume that parents' marital relationship influences their children's attitudes toward marriage, divorce, and family life, in that the current marital relationship serves as a role model for future marital

expectations (Walters, Parker, and Stinnett, 1972). The assumption is that a happy, intact marriage provides a positive marital role model for children, whereas a marriage disrupted by divorce presents a negative marital role model. Divorce thus may encourage children to hold more favorable attitudes toward divorce. Ganong and Coleman (1984) indeed found a significant main effect for family structure on divorce attitudes. Their data, however, indicate that it is high family integration more than "family dissolution or remarriage that influences marital attitudes" (Ganong and Coleman, 1984:429).

Effect of Stepchildren on Remarriage

Research on the effects of remarriage upon children is conflicting. Remarriage is a significant transition with which many children must cope. The immediate acquisition of children upon marriage, however, is also a transition that requires adjustment for the adult thrust into the new parental role. The results of research that compare the marital satisfaction of remarriages versus first marriages also vary. Some studies report that remarried persons were somewhat less satisfied with their marriages than those in first marriages (Glenn and Weaver, 1977; White, 1979), while others found "no significant difference in marital satisfaction between individuals in first marriages and those in remarriages" (DeMaris, 1984:445). Most qualitative studies, however,

suggest that the marital relationship in remarried families suffers more strain due to the presence of stepchildren (Duberman, 1975). For example, White and Booth report that "couples with stepchildren are more than twice as likely to end their marriages in divorce as couples with no stepchildren" (1985:692-693).

Although the presence of stepchildren appears to add stress to the marital relationship in remarried families, Ambert's (1986) findings indicate that the stepchildren's locale of residence has a more significant effect on marital satisfaction than merely the existence of stepchildren. For instance, stepmothers who report the most satisfaction with their marital relationships were those who lived with their stepchildren. Living arrangements wherein stepchildren reside with the other parent and therefore only visit their father and stepmother seem to be associated with less marital satisfaction and more conflicts (Ambert, 1986:797). The live-in situation appears to be a less divisive one for the spouses because they felt that they "had more control and were less at the mercy of ex-spouses" (Ambert, 1986: 797). As Ambert reports,

> [with resident stepchildren] quarrels were more easily overshadowed by other pleasant daily occurrences. With visiting children, a quarrel stood out as the event of the week (1986:801).

Also, although stepmothers acquired extra housework from both resident and visiting stepchildren, with the latter, stepmothers benefited little emotionally, while with resident

stepchildren, closer and deeper relationships developed (Ambert, 1986:801).

In contrast, Crosbie-Burnett's (1989) analysis of the impact of custody arrangement on remarriage found no main effect of custody arrangement on marital satisfaction. Remarried couples, however, reported a significant interaction between custody arrangement and the sex of the adolescent. Remarried couples who share joint custody of adolescent females report the happiest marriages (Crosbie-Burnett, 1989:11). Hobart's research on 232 remarried couples indicates that marital adjustment depends on exactly whose children reside within the remarried family household. Specifically, remarried families wherein the husband's previous-marriage children reside have lower marital adjustment scores than families having custody of only the wife's children (Hobart, 1989:138).

One facilitator of marital adjustment that researchers have recently focused on is social networks. Roberts and Price (1989) found that the best predictor of marital adjustment in a remarriage was the couple's relationship with friends and relatives. In a similar vein, Holman (1981) suggests that community integration has a major effect on marital quality. Community involvement, Holman proposes, is curvilinearly related to marital quality, "with the highest marital quality being found at some intermediate level of community involvement" (1981:148).

Family Functioning

While Duberman (1975) found that family adjustment to remarriage depends upon a couple's satisfaction with the marital relationship, Crosbie-Burnett (1984) challenged the centrality of the marital relationship versus the step relationship as a predictor of overall family functioning. Her data indicate that "the establishment of mutually suitable steprelationships between a stepfather and his stepchildren had a greater effect on family happiness than did the quality of the marital relationship" (Crosbie-Burnett, 1984:462).

Step relationships quite possibly constitute the largest area of academic interest on remarried families, particularly the stepparent-stepchild relationship (Ganong and Coleman, 1984:400). Because mothers more often than fathers retain custody of their children from previous marriages (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1987:88), most stepchildren in remarried families reside with their natural mother and a stepfather. Most studies of stepparent-stepchild relationships, therefore, focus on the stepfather-stepchild relationship. Pink and Wampler (1985), in a review of the literature on stepfather-stepchild relationships, found that research on the quality of such relationships is equally divided between studies that report a positive relationship and those that report a poor relationship.

Although Pink and Wampler's data confirmed their hypothesis that the quality of relationships between

stepfathers and adolescents is poorer than those in first-marriage families, they found that parent-adolescent communication (as reported by the adolescents) does not correspondingly differ. Adolescent girls, however, reported less regard of the stepfather toward the adolescent than girls in first-marriage families (Pink and Wampler, 1985:332), and viewed their stepfathers as "hostile, punitive, and unreasonable on matters of discipline" (Hetherington, 1987:196). Similarly, Clingempeel et al. (1984) found the stepparent-stepdaughter relationship in both stepmother and stepfather families to be more problematic than the stepparent-stepson relationship.

In addition to gender differences among children and their relationships with stepparents, some researchers also report gender differences among stepparents with regard to their stepparent-stepchild relationships. For example, Furstenberg (1987:54) found relationships between children and stepmothers to be more stressful than those between children and stepfathers, a finding that Hobart (1989) and Hobart and Brown (1988) corroborated. Such findings may, in part, be attributable to a wider prevalence of negative stereotypes of stepmothers as compared to stepfathers (Fine, 1986), but may also be accounted for by the more central position that both mothers and stepmothers occupy in childrearing (Santrock and Sitterle, 1987:286). Contrary to these findings, Santrock and Sitterle (1987:287) found stepmother-stepchild relationships

to be more positive than stepfather-stepchild relationships, a finding that they attribute to the central role of the stepmother in comparison to the stepfather.

Some researchers point to uncertainty in stepparental roles as partial explanations for problems that exist in stepparent-stepchild relationships. Whereas most adults today were socialized in a nuclear family and thus acquired the social learning skills of parenting from their parents, the majority of stepparents had no access to role models that would facilitate stepparenting. Stepparents also face difficulties in "attempting to deal with children who have already been socialized by another set of parents" (Kompara, 1980:70). Moreover, stepparental roles lack specific norms for behavior within the stepfamily (Cherlin, 1978). Common problems unique to the stepparental role include: uncertainty about the degree of authority and the amount of affection; discipline of stepchildren and enforcement of rules; and loyalty conflicts, which occur when the stepparent also has biological children (Robinson, 1984:382). Giles-Sims' (1984) study of 99 remarried families revealed that half of the respondents expect stepparents and natural parents to share equally in childrearing duties, but that the actual sharing of these responsibilities occurred in less than a third of the families, "indicating that role ambiguity still remains a problem in the emerging expectations of stepfamilies" (Giles-Sims, 1984:127).

Several researchers expect overall family functioning in remarried families to be more problematic than in first-married families because of the larger number of relationships (for example, ex-in-laws, ex-spouses, and noncustodial parents), more role ambiguity, and a general absence of norms. Peek et al. (1988) found no more conflict in remarried than in first-married families, but reported less cohesion within the entire family unit, particularly between stepparents and children. Peek et al. also characterize remarried families as less flexible and open, and lacking in several interaction skills. They concluded that remarried families exhibit lower levels of family functioning "in that they exhibit less cohesion (except between spouses), less flexibility and openness, and lower levels of interaction skills" (Peek, Waldren, and Sorell, 1988:705). Pink and Wampler (1985) also indicate that although mothers in remarried families both wanted and saw the most cohesion, other members of remarried families described their families as less cohesive and adaptive than first-married families.

Lower levels of cohesion are not necessarily detrimental and may even improve family functioning. Pill (1990) hypothesized that low to moderate levels of cohesion (defined as looser, more flexible intrafamilial relationships) and moderate to high levels of adaptability would result in greater satisfaction with remarried family life. While Pill found marital satisfaction to be lower among remarried

families with lower levels of cohesion and high levels of adaptability, the results of her study indicate support for the hypothesis of family functioning.

Deviance

Some researchers believe that deviance may be higher in remarried families than in first-married families because of the relationship between remarriage and stress. Giles-Sims and Finkelhor (1984) report a higher percentage of stepfathers among sexual abusers as compared to natural fathers. Results from Kalmuss and Seltzer's research (1986) indicate that spouse abuse is more likely in remarried families than in never-divorced (intact) families. Kalmuss and Seltzer acknowledge that abusers are likely to carry behavioral patterns into later marriages, but they also propound that "characteristics of [remarried] families create stress for husbands and wives that may then be enacted as physical aggression" (1984:115).

Needle et al. (1990) studied substance abuse among adolescents from divorced families. Their results indicate a higher incidence of alcohol and drug abuse among adolescents from disrupted families than among those from intact families. The effects of divorce with regard to substance abuse are more profound during adolescence than during childhood, particularly for boys. The custodial parent's remarriage, however, resulted in fewer substance abuse consequences (that

is, trouble with school, friends, physical health problems, and legal problems) for boys, but had an adverse effect on girl's overall drug use.

Divorce

Even though the results of research on remarried families are sometimes conflicting, most research initially searches for negative effects that researchers assume will arise from deviations in the nuclear family. The high rate of divorce in remarriages may largely account for academic preoccupation with the problematic aspects of remarried families. In 1986, Canadian statistics indicated that 11.3% of women and 11.7% of men who divorced were divorced at the time of their most recent marriage (Statistics Canada, 1989a: Table 2-40).

Researchers cite three main explanations in the trend to redivorce. The first explanation pertains to the values of individuals who divorce. Halliday argues that on religious grounds, the population of first marriages "may be divided into stayers (those who will never divorce under any circumstances) and movers (those whose religion does not forbid them to divorce)" (1980:633). According to this argument, there are no stayers in later marriages, since remarried individuals have already demonstrated their willingness to move from one marriage to another. Thus, given equal amounts of dissatisfaction, remarried persons, or 'movers,' will be less inclined than first-married individuals

to remain in an unhappy marriage.

Although a number of studies indicate a lower likelihood of divorce among individuals with conservative religious beliefs, and while the orthodoxy of Catholicism certainly discourages divorce and prohibits remarriage, Halliday's distinction of whether one is a mover or stayer on the basis of religious beliefs cannot account for the entire difference. Furthermore, one must question the prominence that Halliday assigns to the significance of religious beliefs, especially in an age of increasing secularization (Bibby, 1987). Berger (1985), in a report of a New York Times/CBS Poll, found that although the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are strongly against divorce and remarriage, less than 20% of Roman Catholics disapprove of divorce.

The basis of the second explanation lies in the effect of the divorce process itself. Furstenberg and Spanier believe that individuals who divorce are not only less committed to marital continuity, but also that "the experience of divorce predisposes individuals to exit from an unhappy (re)marriage" (1984:439). As a result of interviews with remarried individuals who admitted a willingness to dissolve their second marriages if they did not work out, Furstenberg and Spanier concluded that the divorce experience itself alters the prevailing standard of lifelong commitment to one's spouse (1987:191). Such an explanation is plausible, but, as Cherlin (1978:641) points out, it does not account for the higher

probability of divorce among remarried women with children from a previous marriage.

The third explanation instead argues that it is the complex structure of remarried families that primarily contributes to divorce. While all families face problems, remarried families must cope with additional difficulties. Furthermore, these difficulties are exacerbated because remarried family members lack a set of institutionalized guidelines for coping with remarried family life (Cherlin, 1978:642). Cherlin's hypothesis of the 'incomplete institutionalization of remarriage' proposes that it is precisely this lack of institutionalized guidelines that accounts for the problems and high divorce rate in remarriages.

Critique of Existing Literature

Existing empirical studies on remarried families must be evaluated in terms of both the theoretical framework and methodology that researchers employ. As noted earlier, the theoretical framework underlying a large proportion of research is atheoretical, a position that has been labelled "the deficit-family model" or the "deficit comparison" (Ganong and Coleman, 1984). As Ganong and Coleman observe, "the 'deficit-comparison' attitude tends to restrict vision by limiting research to comparisons of stepchildren to children living in other family structures" (1987:97). Such an

orientation is not conducive to broadening understanding of stepfamily dynamics nor strengths, and instead only reinforces negative stereotypes about the effects of remarriage on children. There is evidence, however, that researchers are beginning to abandon the deficit-family model. Prior to 1970, "86% of the studies on stepchildren were based at least partly on the deficit-comparison model" (Ganong and Coleman, 1987:106), but since 1980, only 43% of research used this framework (Ganong and Coleman, 1987:106).

Another major shortcoming of empirical studies on remarried families concerns the method of analysis employed. Most studies use only a cross-sectional method of analysis and many of these are based on recently separated adults and their children (Cherlin, 1981:76). The periods immediately following separation and remarriage are likely to be the most stressful (Cherlin, 1981:76). Children's adjustment to divorce and remarriage, therefore, is often measured at a time when it is likely at its lowest. More effective and accurate measures of adjustment could be obtained through longitudinal designs, since the literature suggests that the process of adjustment takes longer than first believed (Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1987:307; Mills, 1984; Papernow, 1984). For example, Hetherington's longitudinal study on family relationships six years after divorce found that approximately two years following divorce, the majority of parents and children appear to adapt reasonably well and "certainly showed

great improvement as compared to the first year after divorce" (1987:185). There are, however, only a handful of longitudinal studies. North American researchers who were or are conducting longitudinal studies that examine either divorce, remarriage, or both include Hetherington and Clingempeel (1986), Koren (1983), Furstenberg, Nord, Peterson, and Zill (1983), Ahrons and Wallisch (1987), Hetherington (1987), and Wallerstein and Kelly (1980).

Most studies also fail to differentiate degrees of complexity in remarried families. For example, White and Booth (1985) note that the presence of stepchildren decreases the quality and stability of the marital relationship and complicates familial relationships. It would thus appear to follow that remarried families in which both spouses have resident stepchildren from a previous union, that is, complex families, would face more adjustment problems than remarried families. There may be more financial stress because there are more children to support, greater adjustment would be required on the part of stepsiblings, and there could be an increase in the amount of contact with former spouses. Levels of structural complexity should thus be distinguished in remarried family studies, and such distinctions would allow researchers to compare remarried families to complex families in various areas of adjustment.

It is difficult to generalize the findings on remarried families that have been studied to other remarried families

because of the sampling techniques that researchers use. Researchers have tended to use "convenience samples" instead of random samples. As a result, findings are usually based upon small numbers of white, middle-class couples or individuals (Esses and Campbell, 1984:415). Small sample size also "limits the ability to investigate the influence of multiple variables in any one study" (Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1987:306). As Esses and Campbell observe, the scarcity of rigorous studies that examine remarried family functioning and adjustment "reflects the methodological complexities of studying families generally, in addition to problems that are specific to research with stepfamily populations" (1984:416).

D. CONCLUSION

The study of remarriage is a fairly new field of investigation, but as Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman note, the "growth of information on remarriage and stepparenting has been phenomenal when the number of publications are considered" (1987:303). Studies have revealed that the psychological and social development of children from remarried families generally do not appear to differ from children in intact nuclear families. Younger children seem to adapt better to the remarried family experience than adolescents, and females have more difficulty adjusting to a stepparent than males. Stepchildren encounter the most

difficulty with the issue of divided loyalties. They also tend to hold more favorable attitudes toward divorce.

Stepchildren do appear to add stress to the marital relationship in remarried families, particularly non-resident stepchildren. Stepparents experience stress raising stepchildren because of uncertainty in stepparental roles and reliance on an inappropriate nuclear family ideology. As a result of the complexities of remarried family life, remarried families generally report lower levels of cohesion, flexibility, openness, and interaction skills. Deviance may also be higher in remarried families, such as child and spouse abuse, and substance abuse among adolescents. Many researchers believe that the stress associated with remarried families accounts for the higher divorce rate in remarriages. Problems in remarried families are exacerbated because they lack institutionalized solutions.

Cherlin observes that the family is an institution, insofar as it habitualizes behavior, which family members accept as typical, that is, institutionalized behavior. The habitualization of patterns of behavior narrows the choices of behavior, which results in family members confronting fewer decisions that may cause disagreements, and "correspondingly, [having] less difficulty maintaining family unity" (1978:636). Remarried families, however, because of their complex structure (which is attributed to the presence of children from previous marriages), must solve problems unknown to other

types of families, for which no institutionalized solutions have emerged. As a result, remarried family members must devise their own solutions to problems, a process that Cherlin believes engenders conflict and confusion, and conflict, for most couples, increases the likelihood of divorce.

Cherlin admits that in many societies, complex kinship rules and family patterns co-exist with a functioning, stable family system (1978:643). Remarried families in the United States and Canada, however, lack institutionalized social regulation because these societies orient themselves toward first marriages and therefore provide "little guidance on problems peculiar to remarriages, especially remarriages after divorce" (Cherlin, 1978:643).

E. THESIS OUTLINE

Chapter One summarized research findings on problems that remarried families encounter as a result of the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage. A fairly extensive summary of institution theory is presented in Chapter Two in order to indicate what an institution is, its components, and the prerequisites that are necessary for institutionalization to occur. The third chapter presents a brief history of divorce legislation in both Canada and the United States. A brief cross-cultural comparison of institutionalized patterns of remarriage follows. It concludes with a comparison of the status of the divorced and the widowed in North America. The

methodology of the content analysis comprises Chapter Four, including the sample, coding scheme, and reliability. Finally, the results of the content analysis are presented in Chapter Five, as well as a discussion of the hypotheses and the results.

2. MARRIAGE, REMARRIAGE, THE FAMILY, AND SOCIAL INSTITUTION THEORY

A. INTRODUCTION

Most studies of remarried families tend to be descriptive in nature (Esses and Campbell, 1984). They describe "what" occurs in remarried families, but not "how" or "why" (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:131). Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, in a review of empirical studies on remarriage and stepparenting, lament that there exists a "failure to use theory in formulating research questions and designing studies" (1987b:130). They assert that this failure is responsible for remarried family researcher's incorporation of the "deficit comparison" model into their research. In the absence of a theoretical framework, many researchers simply engage in exploratory research, comparing remarried families to first families, with the expectation that remarried family members, particularly children, operate in a deficit environment.

Recent reviews and critiques of remarried family literature note that little research attention has been given to the variety and complexity of factors that influence remarried family functioning (Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal, 1987; Esses and Campbell, 1984; Ganong and Coleman, 1984). In an effort to remedy this condition, Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal stress the need for a multi-level-multivariate-developmental perspective to broaden the foci of research on

remarried families (1987:65). Borrowing from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) multi-level conceptualization of human development, they categorize research on remarried families that examine factors which influence the quality of remarried family relationships and child outcomes as operating at three levels of analysis: remarried family household, extrahousehold network, and social institution (Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal, 1987:65). The remarried family level of analysis comprises the individual characteristics of family members and the nature of their inter-relationships. The content of research in this level of analysis lies in examining family structure, demographic and personality characteristics of family members, and intrahousehold (that is, husband-wife, parent-child, sibling) relationships. The extrahousehold level consists of "the informal social networks of members of the [remarried family] and may include kin and friends who live in other households" (Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal, 1987:65). Researchers who utilize this level of analysis study relationships with former spouses and other quasi-kin, nonresidential parent-child relationships, residential stepparent's relationships with nonresidential children, and children's relationships with kin of biological parents and stepparents. The social institution level consists of the formal and quasi-formal institutions (for example, schools, the legal system, the mass media, church, and government agencies) and their influence in human relationships.

Interdependency exists among these three levels, in that "variables at one level may affect, both directly and indirectly, variables at the other level" (Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal, 1987:66).

Most research to date operates at the remarried family and extrahousehold network levels of analysis. The social institution level of analysis has received the least attention by remarried family researchers (Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal, 1987:82). Because of the interdependence of the above three levels of analysis, however, it is important to examine the influence of social institutions upon both the remarried family and the extrahousehold network and their relationship to social institutions. Whereas most research on remarried families utilizes a micro level of analysis, the social institution level of analysis utilizes both micro and macro levels of analysis, in that it posits a reciprocal relationship between social structure and individual behavior.

The significance of the social institution level of analysis is that it provides an explanation of the present social organization by examining how and why institutions arise, the effect of institution's influence in human interaction, and how human patterns of behavior can stimulate changes in existing social institutions. This chapter will proceed first with an examination of social institution theory, in which the basic concepts and assumptions will be

outlined. It will also examine the conditions by which the process of institutionalization occurs. Next, the nuclear family in particular as a social institution will be explored. The analysis of the institution of the family will proceed by determining the functions and consequences of the family as an institution, as well as how the institutionalization of the family occurs and whether the family as an institution is collapsing. Finally, this chapter will examine remarriage as an incomplete institution and will argue that remarriage may currently be in the process of being institutionalized. It will examine the institutionalization of remarriage with regard to its function, the attitudes, values, and the creation of norms, and the legal aspect of its institutionalization.

B. SOCIAL INSTITUTION THEORY

The institutional approach was one of the first developed sociological approaches to the study of marriage and the family (Hill and Hansen, 1960:306; Koenig and Bayer, 1981:78; Kenkel, 1977:199). It originated with anthropologists in the eighteenth century and was later adopted by sociologists in the nineteenth century as a means to investigate and explain uniformities and diversities within and between family customs of various people (Sirjamaki, 1964:33). Some of the terminology utilized by institutional theorists overlaps with structural functionalism, particularly the concept of

"function." In the institutional approach, however, the unit of analysis is the institution, whereas in the structural functionalist approach, it is the social system. Also, structural functionalists "view behavior as the expected responses to positions in a system of mutually interrelated positions or roles" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:80), whereas institutionalists view behavior as a manifestation of human needs and values (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:80).

During the time of its inception, the institutional approach as an analytical tool for the study of the family was principally evolutionary in perspective (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:78). Changes in the family "were observed over time and the family was viewed in a broad institutional and historical perspective as lineally progressing toward a more perfect form" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:78). The organismic analogy was also incorporated into the interpretation of family phenomena (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:78). The belief was that one could understand family systems, or more generally, the structure and function of human society by analogy with the nature of living organisms. For example, society, like an organism in nature, "becomes more complex and differentiated in terms of its social structure through evolutionary change" (Abercrombie et al., 1984:147).

Because the "school of positive organicism, within which the institutional approach was nurtured, [had] fallen into disfavor" (Sirjamaki, 1964:33), the institutional approach

lost its popularity as a theoretical frame of reference. The institutionalists later realized, however, that "there has been no linear regularity of change in the universal family" (Zimmerman, 1947:63) as there has been with the evolution of organisms, and abandoned the value conception of change as progress. Although not widely used today, the current institutional approach is comparative in nature, either historical or cross-cultural (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:79). For this reason, its value as a theoretical framework cannot be ignored. Because the process of institutionalization occurs over broad periods of time, the institutional approach is necessary since it permits a historical analysis of family organization and institutions in society and "provides a means to interpret historical change in families, and to relate these to other social and cultural changes in societies" (Sirjamaki, 1964:34).

Definition

Sociologists frequently use the term **institution** to refer to established patterns of normative human behavior that fulfil necessary functions in society (Sirjamaki, 1964:34). More specifically, an institution is "an organized system of practices and rules, developed about a cluster of values (or a value), and the machinery designed to regulate and control the affected areas of behavior" (Kenkel, 1977:201). This definition illustrates two main components of an institution:

the institution as a concept and as a structure (Sumner, cited in Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:376). The **concept** of an institution refers to the "idea, notion, doctrine [or] interest that [lies] at the basis of the institution and that [is] found in some form among all societies" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:376). The **structure** of an institution pertains to the "social apparatus or framework created to fulfil institutional ends or objectives" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:84). Concept and structure are interdependent, that is, they are both parts of the functioning whole (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:376).

Concepts of Institutions

Function

The concepts of institutions "embody the purposes and goals of social life itself" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:376). The most important and obvious purpose of any given collectivity is self-preservation. Members of a collectivity need to fulfil certain functional prerequisites in order for their social life to operate smoothly. These universal prerequisites are:

> [t]he maintenance of biologic [sic] adequacy; the reproduction of new members; the production and distribution of goods and services; the maintenance of internal and external order; the maintenance of meaning and motivation (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:168).

Institutions thus develop in response to basic personal and societal needs (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:84). They provide solutions to "basic problems with which every society must be concerned to keep itself going" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:168).

Institutions may be classified according to their objective function. Thus, each functional prerequisite is regulated by a corresponding institution. Institutions are, however, interconnected. That is, a particular institution may serve a function in areas other than those containing their central problem" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:171). For example, religion fulfils the function of providing meaning to its adherents, but because of the conservative nature of most religions, it also emphasizes conformity to the existing social order, and therefore aids the government (somewhat) in its function of maintaining social order. Institutions are also connected in an interdependent pattern. In order for a society to function, it needs all of the basic institutions operating with at least a minimum of efficiency. Hence, "it is difficult to say that one institution is more important than another in bringing about the functioning of society" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:378).

Values

The study of institutions is in part a study of the culture of a particular society (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:205). Culture, at its most basic level, refers to patterns of behavior (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:202). A "pattern" emerges

when "any aspect of behavior [that is] shared by more than one person in a group or society is viewed as having regularity" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:232). While the fact of culture, that is, the fact that all societies have cultures, is universal, the particular form that culture assumes varies to a greater or lesser extent between societies. Thus, societies may be distinguished from one another according to their cultures.

Central to the concept of culture are cultural configurations. Cultural configurations express the dominant values of a society which are deemed necessary by its members for the continued functioning of society. Cultural configurations are, specifically,

> the moral principles which comprise the social philosophy of a society. They are patterns of covert behavior; as such, they are the culturally approved rules or sentiments which motivate overt behavior and which integrate it into consistent patterns; and they can be deduced only from behavior (Sirjamaki, 1948:464).

Cultural configurations are thus the basic units of the value system of a society and are expressed within an institution (Sirjamaki, 1948:464). A "value" is "the meaning or definition of the worth that is attached to any object, condition, principle, or idea" (Kenkel, 1977:201). The ultimate values embodied in an institution can be ascertained by defining the functions of that particular institution. For example, the functions of the family are primarily reproduction and socialization. Although the family serves

and served other functions, the functions of reproduction and socialization have always been performed by the family (Kenkel, 1977:202) and are considered essential by society's members to the survival and well-being of society.

Origins of Institutions

How do values originate and how do they come to be expressed within and represented by an institution? The process of institutionalization, that is, the manner "by which behavior comes under the regulation of norms" (Sirjamaki, 1964:34), begins with the habitualization of human behavior. According to Berger and Luckmann, "all human activity is subject to habitualization" (1966:50). If a particular action is repeated once or more, then it tends to be habitualized to some degree. The habitualization of action becomes cast into a pattern, "which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort, and which, ipso facto, is apprehended by its performer as that pattern" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:50). One of the conditions necessary for the institutionalization of habitualized or patterned behavior is reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:51). That is, the typifications of particular actions and actors must be shared. The typifications are available to all members of the social group in question, in that actions of a particular type are expected to be performed by actors of a particular type. Thus, "actions [that] are likely to be reciprocally typified ... [are] those actions

that are relevant to [the actors] within their common situation" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:54).

Patterns of behavior emerge because they are functional, that is, they serve a purpose. The habitualization of action into patterns of behavior serves three basic functions: psychological, social, and cultural (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:245). The psychological function of patterns of behavior is that it narrows choices. When behavior is habitualized into patterns, it

> provides the direction and the specialization of activity that is lacking in man's biological equipment, thus relieving the accumulation of tensions that result from undirected drives (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:51).

Because behavior is patterned, actors do not need to define each situation anew. They can anticipate the necessary activity that needs to be undertaken in each situation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:51).

Individuals gain not only a set of expectations for personal behavior appropriate to specific situations, but also the ability to predict other's actions. Behavior that becomes patterned, or routinized, is in the process of becoming institutionalized, because it is typified. Patterns of behavior then also serve a social function, because they unite members of a particular collectivity under a common, shared set of expectations, thus promoting group continuity and unity (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:245).

The individual's social world is experienced as an

objective reality. Institutions are created through the repetition of human activity and are thus human constructs. They are also historical, since "reciprocal typfications are built up in the course of a shared history. They cannot be created instantaneously" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:52). In this sense, institutions have control over human conduct since they set up predefined patterns of conduct. Because of their historicity and control, institutions confront individuals as external facticities. That is, they become objectified and are considered by society's members to possess a reality of their own (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:55), even though they are the product of human activity.

Although habitualized actions are initially imbued with meaning for the actor, "the meanings involved become embedded as routines in [the actor's] general stock of knowledge [and are] taken for granted by him and at hand for his projects into the future" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:50). With successive generations, the original meaning of the institution then, in terms of individual's memories, is inaccessible. Legitimation, therefore, becomes necessary to interpret meaning to the next generation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:58). Legitimation "provides new meanings that serve to integrate the meanings already attached to disparate institutional process" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:85). Legitimation explains and justifies existing institutions. It first creates knowledge, in that the process of legitimation

explains to individuals why things are what they are. Legitimation then imparts values, by informing individuals "why [they] should perform one action and not another" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:87). Legitimation thus provides a cognitive and normative validity to the objectivated meanings of the institutional order. The third function that patterns of behavior serve, therefore, is cultural, in that overt patterns of behavior strengthen "a configuration of ideas, values, and the actions associated with them" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:245). Culture, or patterns of behavior, reinforce the dominant values of a collectivity, which are in turn expressed through habitualized, or patterned behavior.

Structure of Institutions

Once behavior becomes habitualized, it is patterned. When the patterning of behavior occurs, a value system is created in order to maintain the social order that patterns of behavior provide. Patterns of behavior thus become normative. An institution is, however, more than patterns of behavior. Although the presence of a value system and norms are necessary components of an institution, two additional requirements must be present for the institutionalization of patterns of behavior to occur: social control and institutional roles. These two elements comprise the structure of an institution, which is the "social apparatus or framework created to fulfil institutional ends or objectives"

(Koenig and Bayer, 1981:84). Structures of institutions assume various forms in order to implement the values and norms which comprise the concept of an institution.

Social Control

The recognition of particular behavior patterns as normative implies consensus among members of the collectivity regarding appropriate patterns of behavior. Institutions "embody many of the basic social norms, by which the conduct of the individual is judged and blame or praise bestowed" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:384). Institutions, therefore, play a central part in the practice of social control. Deviance from established patterns of conduct must be subject to social control for two reasons: first, for the threat that it may pose to individual members of society, and more importantly, for the threat it may pose to the values which legitimize an institution's existence. Social control or societal regulation of patterns of behavior thus strengthens group solidarity by affirming the dominant values or moral principles shared by members of society and expressed within institutions.

Institutional social control assumes two general forms: informal and formal (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:385). The form that social control assumes depends "on the extent to which the group takes official action with respect to the deviation under consideration" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:516). Regulatory machinery, that is, formal or informal social

control, evolves to standardize behavior that is related to the values of a particular institution (Kenkel, 1977:203). It thus reinforces the structure of an institution.

Informal Controls

Informal controls include "public opinion, ridicule, gossip, supernatural taboos and others" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:516). Individuals are subject to informal social controls while in the process of learning the sanctions of their society. Informal controls "are best exemplified by those of the family or other primary institutional relationships" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:385). Groups exercise informal control by rewarding positive patterns of behavior and punishing or inhibiting negative patterns of behavior. Behavior that is subject to informal control is usually of the kind that violates the basic mores of a group (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:235). Informal control is utilized primarily by the family in its function of socialization. Through socialization, children learn the sanctions of their society "by the example or admonition of [their] parents" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:385). The presence of parents or of any authority figure eventually becomes unnecessary, because the informal controls are internalized and become a part of one's personality. As individuals mature, the positive and negative sanctions of the society, as interpreted through their parents, become their consciences. Thus, the informal institutional controls of society become "so

completely a part of the personality that the individual judges himself [and] his conscience is the voice of society" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:386)

Formal Controls

Control is formal to the "extent to which the group makes its administration a formal, public, affair" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:525). Formal institutional controls "are most clearly illustrated by statutes enacted by national states and enforced by their full police power" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:386-387). Many of the formal controls of a society are merely codified mores which are approved by the group and subsequently formalized. In order to administer a formal sanction, a society must possess a "more or less formally constituted group with authority" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:525), for example, a system of courts, a tribal council, or a police force. The presence of a formal institution signifies a crisis that cannot be handled through informal sanctions (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:527). The most significant factor implied by the presence of formal sanctions is heterogeneity. Informal sanctions "are effective when the members of the group have internalized all the codes, mores, and taboos" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:527), but formal sanctions are required "when such internalization is not effective for certain groups and individuals ... at certain times" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:527). In a heterogeneous society, individuals or groups may develop their own

definitions and meanings of social order and its preservation. When these definitions conflict with those of the rest of society, formal sanctions are applied by a supposedly disinterested third party whose task is to regulate conflict so that social order is maintained (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:527).

Institutional Roles

A role is "the pattern of expected behavior associated with a particular position in society" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:151). Each individual occupies several positions in a society, and "each position carries a number of shared assumptions concerning the functions that the person is supposed to perform while he is occupying it" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:151). Roles involve four general elements. First is the "identification of the self with the objective sense of the action" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:68), so that "the latter becomes invested with emotionality" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:152). Second, the patterns of behavior must be considered by society to be appropriate to a particular behavior and recur regularly in the life of the group (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:152). Third, roles must be reciprocal, that is, they occur in relation to other roles and their meanings must be shared. Roles are social phenomena; "one role cannot be understood without a knowledge of the others in the pattern" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:154). Finally, individual's evaluations of their performance of a particular

role as a success or failure are "based upon the attitudes of other persons toward them" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:152).

A role becomes institutionalized when it is guaranteed by authority (Gerth and Mills, 1964:23). For example, the cluster of roles enacted by family members is guaranteed by "parental authority." In this case, the "head of the household may use sanctions against infractions of the role pattern" (Gerth and Mills, 1964:23). Individuals "must know not only the social expectations attached to [their] own role[s], but those attached to the other roles in the system" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:154). That is, each role specifies the obligations not only of the person occupying it, but also the obligations toward others in the relationship. An institutionalized role then, carries with it three general types of behavior which are expected of the individual occupying a particular role: required, prohibited, and allowed behavior (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:96; Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:152-153). Required behavior involves responsibility for types of role behavior. Proper performance of required behavior merits reward, most likely in the form of social approval, and failure to adequately perform required role behavior results in punishment. Prohibited behavior refers to types of behavior that are forbidden when an individual occupies a particular role. Behavior that is allowed pertains to "behavior that is <u>permitted</u> but not

demanded of the individual in his role capacity" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:153). That is, the behavior is optional and the failure to perform such behavior does not bring any social judgement (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:97). Allowed behavior is thus behavior within a role that is at the discretion of its performer.

In addition to obligations, roles also secure rights to the individual occupying a particular role. Roles thus imply a reciprocal relationship, because "no role exists in isolation but is patterned to gear in with the complementary or reciprocal role of a role partner" (Spiegel, 1960:363). Thus, "the socially defined rights which accrue to one of the [roles] correspond to the socially defined duties which accrue to the other, and vice versa" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:97). Roles thus imply status, for if an individual occupies a particular role, then he can expect certain rights from others. Therefore, roles are not only expected patterns of behavior, but also "societal definition[s] of the rights and duties belonging to an individual who fills a certain position in society" (Kenkel, 1977:200).

Roles and Personality

Roles, as representations of the values of institutions, play a significant part in the formation of personality (Gerth and Mills, 1964:173; Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:378). A person "is composed of an internalization of organized social roles" (Gerth and Mills, 1964:83). Thus, institutions, by way

of roles, not only modify individual's external lives, but also their inner lives, "for one aspect of learning a role consists of acquiring motives which guarantee its performance" (Gerth and Mills, 1964:173). Through effective socialization, the values that institutions embody become the values of the individual. Socialization emphasizes the learning of role expectations attached to various positions that individuals come to occupy.

> Through persisting role-taking, first in play and then in actuality, the child comes to acquire his human nature, in the sense that he becomes adapted to the culture of his society and thereby learns how to live in groups (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:151).

Personality may thus be "considered sociologically as the total group of roles that the individual plays in his social relationships" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:151).

Differences occur among personalities because individuals attach varying meanings to overall culture patterns. Differences in personality also result from genetic differences among individuals and their influence in personality formation. Besides genetic determinants on personality, individuals are also subject to noninstitutional elements in the culture which influence the formation of personality. Hence, institutional roles are not the only influence upon personality development, but nevertheless, "they comprise by far the most important single group of influences in this respect" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:381). Thus, although every individual personality is to some extent

unique, some aspects of personality will be shared by nearly everyone in a group or society. The particular aspect of shared personality traits "consists of the 'major configuration' or ethos of a culture" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:356).

Institutions "are embodied in individual experience by means of roles" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:69). Through such embodiment, institutions ensure their continuity because individuals act as transmitters of their social heritage, of which institutions are the conservers.

> The immortality of the pattern [of role transmission] thus consists partially in the fact that all the members of a society do not die at the same time, and hence that there are members and functionaries to continue the institutional concepts and structures through the living stuff of their own personalities (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:381).

Individuals are thus active elements in a society (Hill and Hansen, 1960:306). As children, individuals are initially the passive recipients of socialization, and the internalization of social values via role-taking contributes to their personality formation. As adults, however, they socialize new members of society into the standardized patterns of behavior, or culture, and thereby assume an active role in the transmission and perpetuation of culture.

Functions of Roles

Roles function at two levels: macro and micro. The macro function of roles pertains to the institutional level of

analysis. Institutionalized roles "represent the expression of values [that] people hold in common" (Kenkel, 1977:200). Therefore, in order to ascertain the values or culture that a collectivity embraces, one need only to analyze its institutions. Roles are the means by which behavior is governed and relationships organized. They help to maintain social order by specifying the rights and obligations that individuals are entitled to and must perform. Roles share in the controlling nature of institutions, because "as soon as actors are typified as role performers, their conduct is ipso facto susceptible to enforcement" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:70).

Micro-analyses of roles concentrate on individual performances of role expectations and the meanings that roles furnish for social actors. The units of analysis are not institutions, but rather, interaction in social settings (Knorr-Cetina, 1981:9). Because roles provide generally accepted and culturally approved expectations for behavior, social interaction is made easier for any given individual. Individuals, via role taking, learn how to accommodate their behavior to the expected behavior of others in defined situations (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:98). Standards of role performance are components of the common stock of knowledge. They are shared, and as such, they are indispensable to social existence (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 41). If all situations of social relationships were ones in which roles "were poorly

defined and uncertain, [then] everyday life would be one series of exhausting incidents after another" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:98). Roles thus function to routinize behavior patterns for individuals and aid in predicting behavior patterns that emerge during interaction. The concept of role is the key term not only in the definition of the individual, but also in the definition of an institution (Gerth and Mills, 1964:22). The analysis of roles, therefore, is important in studying the institutions of a particular society because "it reveals the mediations between the macroscopic universes of meaning objectivated in a society and the ways by which these universes are subjectively real to individuals" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:73). Individuals apprehend the institutional order as a social fact. That is, institutions are perceived to be external to individuals, coercive, and as more than a product of subjective definitions. Institutions have "a history that antedates the individual's birth and [are] not accessible to his biological recollection" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:56). Institutions are coercive, insofar as "control mechanisms ... are usually attached to the most important of them" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:57). The process by which institutions become externalized and attain the character of objectivity is objectivation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:57). Institutions are no more than objectivated human activity. Although objectivity marks individual's social world, it "does not

thereby acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:57).

When analyzing the institutions of a particular society and their effects on individual behavior, it is necessary to emphasize that the relationship between humans and their social world is a dialectical one (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:57). In other words, individuals produce their social world, which in turn, because of objectification, produces individuals. The body of knowledge contained in roles, institutions, and culture, is learned as objective truth in the course of socialization, becomes internalized as an individual's subjective reality, and "this reality in turn has the power to shape the individual" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:63). This is not to say that culture, by way of roles and institutions 'determines' the individual's personality and behavior, since "the individual's behavior is itself contributing to the formation of culture" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:279). Instead, it means that humans are "capable of forgetting [their] own authorship of the human world, and further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:82). Because of the reification of human phenomena, individuals lose the awareness that they are indeed the producers of the social world, not merely the products. It is only when individuals realize that their social world is a human construct and not an epiphenomenon that social change is

possible.

Social Change

Institutions, as patterned forms of behavior, are "more resistant to social change than behavior where such uniformity and regularity do not apply" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:388). This does not mean, however, that institutions are immutable. Institutionalization is not an irreversible process (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:76). Because institutions are man-made, they can be remade. As Berger and Luckmann indicate, "for a variety of historical reasons, the scope of institutionalized actions may diminish" (1966:76). Conversely, new institutions may be created or existing ones simply modified. Generally though, the major institutional patterns themselves "are maintained from generation to generation, often with many modifications, it is true, but with their essential features essentially unchanged" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:389).

Two main factors account for social change with regard to institutions: changing needs and values, and a discrepancy between real versus ideal patterns of behavior. Because institutions develop in response to basic individual and social needs, it follows that they will "change their form through continued group behavior and changing needs" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:84). All societies experience social and cultural change as a result of social, economic, political, and other causes (Sirjamaki, 1964:35). When such conditions

of change occur, "societies alter their institutions ... [because they] require fresh solutions to new problems of existence" (Sirjamaki, 1964:35). In order to adjust to altered circumstances, societies alter their institutions to ensure stability in periods of social change. When patterns of behavior change, due to social, economic, or political causes, changes in values occur, so that they legitimize the new behavior patterns, or vice versa. For example, the increase in the divorce rate is symptomatic of the change in the value of marriage from an institution that emphasized monogamous, life-long commitment to one that emphasizes personal satisfaction. Thus, "change in the institutional machinery [that is, structure] may be indicative of changes in values" (Kenkel, 1977:203).

Social change may also be underway when there exists a discrepancy between ideal versus real patterns of behavior. 'Ideal' patterns of behavior "are those which members of a society believe they ought to follow, while 'real' patterns are those which are actually followed" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:239). When a culture is changing rapidly, there is an increase in the discrepancy between ideal and real patterns of behavior. Although the vast majority of society's members may adhere to the values of ideal patterns (that is, what people believe and say they ought to do), the real or true patterns (that is, what people actually do and think) may become too prevalent to ignore. As a result, the ideal type may become

less valued when the exceptions to it increase rapidly.

It is important to emphasize that individual personalities are important factors in social change. Not everyone will subscribe to ideal behavior patterns. Because no two individuals are identical, different meanings are attached to culture patterns, "and cultural change is initiated by the interaction of these varying interpretations" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:289). Of course, the number of varying meanings and the prevalence of real as opposed to ideal patterns of behavior must be statistically significant in order for change to occur. That is, although individuals are themselves instruments of social change, social change usually does not occur until the real patterns of behavior exhibited by individuals become the patterns of an aggregate. Legitimation of the real patterns of behavior may eventually occur, which either modifies the existing value system or creates a new value system. When the real patterns of behavior are legitimized and sanctioned through social control, they become institutionalized, and may eventually come to represent ideal types of behavior patterns.

Discrepancies always exist between ideal and real patterns of behavior, especially in heterogeneous societies.

> When the behavior of a growing proportion of people is directed toward goals that are competitive with the traditional ones, this can reasonably be interpreted as evidence of waning loyalty to the traditional value. It is necessary, however, not to confuse any amount of deviancy with disloyalty to the institution ... the presence of condoned deviations and even, within limits, an increase in the extent of condoned deviations are not unmistakable signs of a growing disloyalty to the institution (Kenkel, 1977:204).

Institutional change is inevitable (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:389). Institutional change, however, is not to be equated with institutional decline. Change can strengthen or weaken an institution, and "it does not necessarily do either" (Kenkel, 1977:205). Whether the cause of social change is social, economic, political, or otherwise, social change and the subsequent modification of institutions are indications that the functions of society and the needs of individuals require new methods of achievement.

Critique of Social Institution Theory

There are two major shortcomings of the institutional approach. First, "the individual is of minimal concern to those employing this frame of reference" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:91). Institutionalists underemphasize the role of individual need in the rise of social institutions. Institutions, as patterns of behavior for a collectivity, should be treated as macrophenomena, but they are also "microphenomena as specifications of a broader cultural pattern" (Muench, 1987:138). Micro and macro levels of

analysis, therefore, must be integrated when studying any concrete action (Muench, 1987:138). Although institutions shape individual patterns of conduct and transmit cultural values to individuals, individual needs are the sources of institutions. When these needs change or are not being adequately fulfilled by the existing institution(s), then institutions will either adapt to changing individual needs or new institutions will arise to better satisfy individual needs. The other major shortcoming is that "it deals with the modal family" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:91). Institutionalists most often study the most numerous family type in a society and thereby exclude the unique family types that exist within a society. They also focus on the family itself rather than on the internal workings of particular family groups (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:91).

In defense of the institutional approach with regard to the latter criticism, it is a useful approach with which to study trends in the family's structure and values. Furthermore, the family type that institutionalists study is admittedly an ideal type, around which many variations exist, and these variations may also be studied through use of the institutional approach, as Kenkel demonstrated in his analysis of the black family in the United States (1977:363-381).

Finally, while it is true that the study of the individual is incidental to the institutional approach, the institutional approach attempts to overcome the gap between

action and structure, or between individuals and institutions. This attempt is accomplished by emphasizing the duality of structure, whereby actors are able to instigate change in the structures that generate social action (Giddens, 1981:161).

C. THE FAMILY AND MARRIAGE AS INSTITUTIONS

Many sociologists and members of society generally agree that the family is one of the most basic and important institutions in society (Kirkpatrick, 1955:13; Hill and Hansen, 1960:306; Koenig and Bayer, 1981:84). That is, it is "an agency whose activities have been traditionally considered as indispensable to the 'ongoingness' of [North American] society" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:545). Definitions as to what constitutes a family, however, vary, and such variation is due to the fact that definitions of the family are socially constructed (Coontz, 1988:13). The essence of a family is that "the persons who constitute it and who interact with each other in a meaningful context are considered to be related to each other ... by blood ... or by marriage" (Nett, 1988:20). As Nett indicates,

> the words 'considered to be' are important, since quasi-family members such as adopted children, and some types of non-marital cohabitation (called 'common law' marriages in societies circumscribed by law), are obviously included (1988:20).

A definition of the family must encompass more than the fact of biology, since "the family's boundaries are always decomposing and recomposing in continuous interaction with

larger domains" (Coontz, 1988:13). Thus, the family is not merely a biological or mating group, but a social group, in which its "members are tied together by patterned social interaction and a sense of belonging" (Nett, 1988:21). Definitions are, however, generally "relative to purposes" (Kirkpatrick, 1955:13), and the purpose here is to define the family according to the institutional frame of reference. Hence, the family as an institution is defined as "structures consisting of positions filled by persons whose interaction includes patterns of communication and reciprocal rights and duties, or relationships" (Nett, 1988:23). The particular structure that the family assumes depends upon demographic variables, such as births, the death of one or more of the parents, divorce, and remarriage, and cultural values, such as whether the family is nuclear or extended, matrilineal or patrilineal, and so on.

The institution of marriage in North American society is defined as "a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving two or more persons of the opposite sex whose relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and the birth of children" (Kirkpatrick, 1955:14). Even if children are not conceived, the social expectation is that marriage is enduring. The institution of marriage is central to the institution of the family, because its key function is to legitimize parenthood (Reiss, 1980:50). Reiss argues that "the marital institution is essential as a means of selecting

adequate nurturers for the family institution" (1980:51). Marriage is thus viewed as a transition to the family institution. Non-parental marriages occur among older couples who marry or remarry, and younger couples who forgo having children. Such marriages are an alternative type of marriage, which Reiss terms "companionship marriage" (1980:345) and are socially and psychologically distinct from marriages in which the couple eventually produces children. The family in North American society is a conjugal unit, that is, "it is based upon the central relationship of husband and wife" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:430). As such, marital satisfaction assumes precedence over satisfaction with other familial relationships. Thus, the ideal family type of two adults of the opposite sex and their children ceases to exist when the marital relationship is dissolved.

The relevance of the family to society and individuals can be ascertained by outlining its functions. Although the functions of the family are increasingly becoming subsumed by other institutions, three universal functions exist. These functions are universal because they "appear to be performed by the family in every society" (Adams, 1971:81). They are: reproduction, socialization, and the regulation of sexual behavior (Kenkel, 1977:202; Kirkpatrick, 1955:14; Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:439; Bennett and Tumin, 1952:546). The concept of family functions, however, is multidimensional, and has at least three distinct meanings (Adams, 1971:80), all of which

require analysis. First, it may refer to the functions of families for the larger society, in which case a macro analysis of family functions is required. In this sense, the family is the mediator between society and its members. Second, it may relate to the functions of family for its individual members, and thus require a micro level of analysis. Third, the concept of functions may apply to changes in the functions of the family, whereby an analysis of the other major institutions in a society is necessitated. All three concepts of family functions are significant in understanding the family as an institution.[1]

The Family Institution and Society

Institutions are in part comprised of the cultural patterns of a particular society, and as such, the functions that they perform are those that are considered essential to the survival of a society. They "arise from and reflect the society in which they are found" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:430). The three universal functions that the family performs primarily serve the interests of the larger society, which may be defined as "an interdependent set of institutions applying to a group of people and providing a framework for social life" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:82-83). The family is the unit in society that is held primarily responsible by the

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[1]The following analysis of the family institution and its functions will ignore cross-cultural issues.

society for the reproduction of its members (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:546). For a society to survive, new members must be produced to replace those who are dying. From society's perspective, "this might be called the replacement function" (Adams, 1971:82). Social definitions regarding the family's biological function are changing, in that families are no longer characterized by a "prolific performance of this function" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:439). The biological function, however, is still central to the family institution.

Closely related to the function of reproduction is the regulation of sexual behavior. All societies "have established rules and regulations, centering in the family, to assure both that the natural sexual urge can be expressed and that it can be controlled" (Kenkel, 1977:287). This is not to say that all families in every society regulate sexual behavior in an identical manner, but rather, that some type of regulation does occur among families in every society (Kirkpatrick, 1955:47). The societal problems of ensuring physical survival, maintaining orderly and satisfactory group living, and providing for the psychological needs of its members all contribute to the universality of regulations on sexual behavior (Kenkel, 1977:287). All societies have established a relatively enduring, heterosexual, social relationship within which the participants can satisfy their sexual needs (Kenkel, 1977:287). Monogamous marriage, as an institution, functions not only as an outlet for sexual

satisfaction, but also, because of the ideal of its enduring nature, is "beneficial in dealing with the helpless infant, which has such a long dependency period before it reaches maturity" (Kenkel, 1977:287).

The prohibitions on some types of sexual behavior serve to minimize disruption within the family and society. For example, most societies have proscriptions against incest, adultery, and premarital sex. The incest taboo is universal, not only because of the biological harm of close inbreeding, but "because parent-child and sibling incest would be disruptive to the family" (Kenkel, 1977:288). The functions of prohibitions of adultery are twofold. First, society assigns statuses to its members, which, within the family, define individual's familial functions, identities, and biological relations. A particular status denotes an individual's position in the group. Societal and family rules

> governing care and support of children, inheritance of property, use of family name, and mate selection all rest on the assumption that biological relationships are unambiguous (Kenkel, 1977:288).

Illegitimate children, which may result from a man's sexual liaison with a woman who is not his wife, "would confuse relationships and responsibilities and could be disruptive to the group if they proliferated" (Kenkel, 1977:288). Second, prohibitions against adultery are "related to the desires of societies to maintain a marriage system that promotes harmony for the principals and is sufficiently enduring to allow them

to socialize their young" (Kenkel, 1977:288). A tolerant attitude toward adultery may promote mistrust and conflict in marital relationships and thus result in unstable marriages, a condition that "would interfere with and complicate the socialization function of the family" (Kenkel, 1977:289). Premarital sex is subject to disapproval for the same reasons that adultery is, mainly, that it interferes with the socialization and status ascription needs of children that may result from such an experience. It is important to emphasize that violations of rules do not signal rejection of the values behind the rules. Although the actual behavior of North American society's members appears to reject the prohibitions on adultery and premarital sex, the ideals of monogamous marriage and to a lesser extent, sex only within marriage, are adhered to.

The final universal function of the family is socialization. The family is the primary socialization agent in society (Nett, 1988:150). Socialization is

> the process of learning the group's mores and standards and learning to conform to them, of learning the group's traditions, of becoming imbued with a sense of oneness with the group, and of doing all this to a degree sufficient to command at least the tolerance of one's fellows (Kenkel, 1977:246).

The family's primacy in socialization is due to several factors. First, families are "the first cultural agents to attempt to socialize children" (Kenkel, 1977:253). Second, they exert the most persistent influence in children's lives

(Nett, 1988:150). Third, the family is characterized by emotionality, that is, "the most profound human emotions find their expression in the family" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:432). Because family members thus stand in the closest emotional relationship to the child, what is taught "has the potential for becoming an integral part of [that child's] basic personality structure" (Kenkel, 1977:254). Finally, the family "exerts the most extensive and varied responsibilities upon its members of any institution" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:432), and thereby continuously binds its members to each other.

The functions that an institution serves represent the ultimate values of an institution (Kenkel, 1977:202). The family institution, as a representative of the larger society, socializes its members according to the values, or cultural configurations of its society (Sirjamaki, 1948:465). As Sirjamaki indicates,

> configurations reach into the most intimate areas of individual and family behavior; they furnish the meanings and determine right and wrong behavior in courting, in husband-wife and parent-child relationships, in heterosexual social activity, and in ideas about sex (1948:465).

One basic configuration that appears in North American society is that "marriage is a dominating life-goal" (Sirjamaki, 1948:465). Although many more individuals are choosing to remain single, most individuals eventually marry (Wilson, 1984:199). The divorce rate may appear to indicate that

individuals value marriage less, but remarriage rates indicate otherwise. Other configurations are that marriage should be based on personal affection and choice, sex should be contained within marriage, and also that "the criterion of a successful marriage is the personal happiness of husband and wife" (Sirjamaki, 1948:466, 468). North American society highly evaluates youth, as is illustrated by the following two configurations:

> [t]he best years of life are those of youth, and its qualities are the most desirable ... [and] children should be reared in a child's world and shielded from too early participation in adult woes and tribulations (Sirjamaki, 1948:467-468).

All of the above configurations emphasize not only the personal happiness of the family's members, but serve to reinforce the socialization function of the family institution. Socialization may be considered to be the most important function of the family, since the cultural configurations regard childhood as the most significant period in individual's lives, in terms of personality development and internalization of norms. An additional configuration found in North American society is that "individual, not familial, values are to be sought in family living" (Sirjamaki, 1948:470). The values of individualism are paramount in the North American family institution. That is, the family exists for its members, and serves to "support the development of individual personality in the context of family and community relationships" (Sirjamaki, 1948:470). As Sirjamaki notes,

> [i]n this respect, the family is in relatively close adjustment to the total culture, in which the democratic realization of the potentialities of all its members is an ideal (1948:470).

The family structure that best embodies the cultural configuration of individualism is the nuclear family.

As an institution, the family embodies the values of society. Society's values are assured continuity, for the values instilled by the family "are transmitted from generation to generation within the individual family systems which make up the institution" (Hill and Hansen, 1960:306). Families socialize their members to adequately perform specific role behaviors so that they may function as competent adults in society (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:550). As representatives of the institutional order, family systems foster conformity to socially accepted patterns of behavior, and they do so mainly through informal control. Families express approval for role-appropriate behavior and disapproval for failure to properly perform role expectations. Thus, "from society's standpoint, this [socialization] is the social control function - a result of the family's embodying and imparting the society's culture" (Adams, 1971:82). Through socialization, families produce members, whose personality characteristics as adults ideally "are compatible with the demands and expectations of the society of which [they are] member[s]" (Kenkel, 1977:246).

The Family Institution and Individuals

The family is an institution that exists to satisfy both societal and personal needs (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:79). The family's socialization of its members into role-appropriate behavior benefits not only society, but also its individual members. Family members, particularly parents, serve as role models "of several kinds of relationships which are fundamental to social structures in general" (Nett, 1988:152). As Nett indicates, children observe

> asymmetrical power relationships (as between parent and small child), egalitarian relationships (as between siblings and parents), age relationships (between older, same age, and younger siblings, between grandparents and grandchildren), and gender relationships (between females and males playing roles in various positions) (1988:152).

The family thus serves to prepare children for roles that they will encounter outside of their families. Regarding the effectiveness of socialization by the family, Kenkel states that "there is reasonably objective data that most young people are or are becoming capable of functioning as full adults in [North American] society" (1977:279).

The family's importance to individuals lies partly in its contribution to the formation of new member's identities. That is, "it is from the family that the child first acquires [its] place in society" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:548). Through families, individuals gain not only a place in the community, but also a sense of self-conception. One's family

members are the most important 'others' in an individual's early life, and through them, individuals learn how and what to think about themselves from hearing, seeing, and experiencing the effects of what others think about them (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:549). Families also create a sense of identity that differentiates members of one group from another. This sense of identification is created through boundary maintenance. Boundaries include "shared experience, space, property, ritual activities, and beliefs" (Walker and Messinger, 1979:186).

The family is also instrumental in the formation of children's personalities (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:382; Kenkel, 1977:246). From the family value system, "the individual derives direction and the standards which become internalized as a part of his personality" (Bell and Vogel, 1960:32). The fact of having a personality is dependent upon socialization (Kenkel, 1977:246), but because no two humans are identical in terms of personality, there are limits on the effect of socialization on personality development.

Besides the material needs and protection needs, families also attend to the emotional or psychological needs of children. The affectional function of the family, which provides intimate and personal relationships for all family members, is one of the most important and essential benefits that the family provides to its members. Security, love, and esteem are dependency needs that the family satisfies, and

these "needs must be met if children are to become autonomous persons ... and no other single group seriously rivals the potential of a family in fulfilling them" (Nett, 1988:152). The contemporary family is initiated in terms of affection, in that love constitutes the primary reason for marriage, and the "criterion of successful marriage is the personal happiness of husband and wife" (Sirjamaki, 1948:466). Marriage "serves as a protection against anomie for the individual" (Berger and Kellner, 1991:177) in that it creates a reality for individuals whereby they can experience their lives in a meaningful, sense-making manner. Family members, as role incumbents, have certain rights which accrue to any status position (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:97). For example, children have the right to expect material and psychological care from their parents, parents have the right of authority over their children, and spouses have the right to certain expectations of each other, such as intimacy, fidelity, and financial support, among others. The rights that attach to any particular status are the duties of another status (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:57). Family members, particularly parents, thus also have obligations. Failure to carry out one's obligations is subject to social control. The family, as an agent of social control, exercises informal control over family members with regard to specified obligations that members fail to perform. The family is also subject to social control by a formal structure, namely, the legal system.

Laws, as codified statements of rules, are "perhaps the most recognizable of the instruments that are developed by a society to bring the goals and values of the family into the world of action" (Kenkel, 1977:203). In industrialized countries, the family is a legally organized and initiated entity (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:563). Laws specify who may marry whom, and outline the rights and duties of the contracting parties (Nett, 1988:212), and the subsequent family unit. The state involves itself in a seemingly private unit mainly because of society's concern with children's support and welfare (Nett, 1988:213). When family members refuse to adequately perform their family role expectations, the law "punishes for failure to perform them when the failure makes social dependents of the individuals affected" (Bennett and Tumin, 1952:563).

Changes in the Family

Loss of Functions

As western society became "more industrialized, urbanized, and secularized, the family lost many of the functions that it formerly conducted" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:429). The institution of the family was traditionally multifunctional, in that it assumed many of the functions that are presently performed by other institutional agencies (Adams, 1971:83). Its first and foremost function was economic. Formerly, the family was "the central unit of both

production and consumption" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:433). The family unit was responsible for its own provisions, which most often were produced on the family farm (Demos, 1986:17). With the shift from a rural, agrarian economy to an urban, industrialized wage economy, the economic function shifted to individuals in "family households who entered into social and economic relations with others as individuals, not as family collectivities" (Nett, 1988:47). The educational function previously belonged to the family, but has been moved to the schoolroom, and today, "the law makes it impossible, except under extreme, extenuating circumstances, for parents to keep their children at home to educate them" (Adams, 1971:74). Although children still receive parental education in the sense of socialization, "in the more formal sense of education, the family has undergone a steady decline in importance" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:436). The family was also formerly the principal source of recreation for its members, but today it must compete with commercial agencies (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:437). The family "traditionally functioned as the informal arm of the church" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:438), but with the increasing secularization of society, the family's religious function is less significant. Previously, the family

> received the adult member to its collective bosom when he or she was sick, unemployed, or widowed. The family protected the parents when they became too old to care for themselves (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:438).

Private and public institutions have assumed the protective functions that the family once performed. Hospitals care for the family's ill, insurance companies provide financial assistance (to those who can afford it), and social assistance programs and welfare agencies protect the widowed, unemployed, and elderly. Under present conditions, families often do not have the resources to care for their members.

As a result of the loss of many of its traditional functions to specialized agencies, "the family too, has become a specialist, ... in providing affection and understanding for its members" (Adams, 1971:84). The primary emphasis in marital and family life is on the happiness and satisfaction of its participant's psychological and emotional needs. The cultural accent on the personal happiness of the husband and wife as the 'criterion' of a successful marriage is of relatively recent origin (Sirjamaki, 1948:466). It has, however, along with an emphasis on qualitative parent-child relationships, become the idealized model of the modern family (Birdwhistell, 1980:462). This function of providing satisfying relationships to its members does not ensure stability for the family, because individual desires are increasingly assuming priority over the rights and duties that bind family members (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:445). Individuals predominantly marry to find happiness, and if they do not find it within their marriages, they turn to divorce as a way out.

Divorce

Divorce may be regarded as a "subinstitution within the larger family institution" (Kirkpatrick, 1955:512), because it "formally recognizes that the marriage contract is no longer binding and it redefines the status, the relationships, and role obligations established at marriage" (Kenkel, 1977:319). Today, divorce accounts for the most significant change in family structure. The ideal, conjugal family unit is increasingly being replaced, through divorce, by lone-parent and remarried families. The increase in the divorce rate is due not only to liberalized divorce laws, but also to the type of marriage system found in most industrialized countries. Previously, the primary motive to marry and remain married was economic, and families were held together through economic interdependence (Kirkpatrick, 1955:518). In describing contemporary marriages, Carl Rogers says that

> it is becoming increasingly clear that a man-woman relationship will have permanence only to the degree that it satisfies the emotional, psychological, intellectual, and physical needs of the partners (cited in Kenkel, 1977:357).

With the cultural emphasis on their function of personal satisfaction, the family and marriage are overloaded institutions. The goals set up by the cultural configurations are often "unattainable and leave people failing both as spouses and as parents" (Birdwhistell, 1980:465). Sirjamaki states that from a cultural viewpoint,

> if marriages are made on the basis of personal and inevitably shifting emotions, without the added support of other institutional devices, then they should be equally easy to dissolve (1948:467).

The present high divorce rate, therefore, "is in this sense made explicable and partially condoned by the cultural rules of marriage" (Sirjamaki, 1948:467). It is the safety valve that makes the system workable (Adams, 1971:332; Price and McKenry, 1989:9).

Most people consider changes in the traditional family type (that is, a first-married couple and their children) to be disastrous to the family institution (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983:318) because "the value judgements based upon the traditional type ... are so strong" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:446). Changes in the structure and in the functions of the family, however, do not indicate the decline of the family institution. Instead, they indicate that a diversification in family structure is occurring. The institutions of marriage and the family "are still in the process of accommodating [themselves] to the sociological changes introduced by the industrial revolution" (Bernard, 1956:21). Therefore, society is merely witnessing a transition from one type of family to another, and not the decline of the family institution.

Remarriage

Because most divorced persons eventually remarry, the increase in divorce rates does not indicate disillusionment with the institution of marriage. In fact, the high divorce

rate "can be used as evidence that marriage and the family are highly valued in modern society" (Kenkel, 1977:357), because it indicates that individuals will not tolerate unhappy, or "empty-shell" marriages and that they believe that marriage provides the "best relationship for satisfying the deep-seated needs of men and women" (Kenkel, 1977:357). Thus, the ideal goal of marriage is still valued, but the means of achievement have changed. That is, most individuals still desire a monogamous marriage, but "there is no longer the automatic assumption that one's full-time mate will necessarily also be one's life-long mate" (Veevers, 1991:20). The high rate of divorce and remarriage then do not signify disenchantment with the institution of marriage, but rather seem indicative of a trend toward serial monogamy (Veevers, 1991:20). Remarriage serves both individual and societal functions. Remarriage offers the divorced another chance to participate in an intimate and personally satisfying relationship that is socially legitimate and legally recognized. From a societal perspective, a high remarriage rate stabilizes society and perpetuates the institution of marriage (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:89). The early proponents of the institutional frame of reference emphasized the stability of the family and therefore considered divorce to be somewhat problematic unless it was accompanied by a high remarriage rate (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:89). Today, the cultural configuration of marital happiness (upon which the marriage contract is initiated and

sustained) assumes primacy, for most couples, over family stability. Divorce is thus institutionalized as a safety valve that individuals use to free themselves from a legally binding relationship that they consider to be dysfunctional.

Some researchers regard divorce as a subinstitution (Kirkpatrick, 1955:512) within which many institutionalized regularities exist (Goode, 1956:207). Divorce has many institutional characteristics. The existence of divorce arrangements across societies is universal (Kirkpatrick, 1955:513; Price and McKenry, 1988:9). Divorce serves a basic need, which is to free individuals from unhappy or abusive relationships so that they may pursue the ideal marital relationship, if they so choose. It is based on the value that marriage should be personally satisfying, and if not, it should be able to be terminated. A code of divorce law exists (the "regulatory machinery"), which specifies the conditions under which a divorce may be obtained and redefines the legal rights and obligations of the participants.

Although divorce exemplifies many of the basic characteristics necessary for it to be termed an institution, it is in many ways an incomplete institution, because many pressures exist to push divorced individuals out of their divorced status and into remarriage (Goode, 1956; Bernard, 1956:118-130; Goode, 1982:164). For example, divorced persons suffer from status ambiguity (Goode, 1956:210), especially if they have children; they may miss the companionship associated

with marriage (Bernard, 1956:124), especially in a society that largely socializes individuals to feel most comfortable in the married status (Goode, 1956:214); the cultural emphasis on romantic love may influence divorced individuals to 'try again'; the costs of rearing children as a lone-parent are higher, especially for females, in terms of energy allocation (Goode, 1982:164), maintenance, and social approval, since most members of society still believe that children should have two resident parents (Goode, 1956:213); and families and friends of divorced individuals exert pressure to remarry (Goode, 1956:212; Bernard, 1956:127-128). To identify divorce as an incomplete institution is not to suggest that postdivorce adjustment is unpatterned or unstructured. To the contrary, "there is great regularity in the behavior patterns of most [divorced persons]: they are reassimilated to the status of 'married'" (Goode, 1956:207). Remarriage is thus an "institutionalized solution" to the many problems associated with the status of divorced individuals (Cherlin, 1981:87; Goode, 1956:210).

D. REMARRIAGE AS AN INCOMPLETE INSTITUTION

Remarriage may provide solutions to many of the problems that exist within the divorced condition, but is itself an incomplete institution (Cherlin, 1978; 1981:87). Remarriage is incompletely institutionalized primarily because our society is oriented toward first marriages, and therefore provides

"little guidance on problems peculiar to remarriages, especially remarriages after divorce" (Cherlin, 1978:643). Members of first-marriage families often do not realize that they interact in ways that are largely defined by cultural scripts. There exists a 'nuclear family ideology' that prescribes and proscribes certain behavior patterns and furnishes values for certain behavior patterns. Role expectations and obligations are clearly defined and established within the first-married family structure, and hence permit family members to ease into their particular role positions. Remarried family members enjoy no such luxury. They "experience stress as they try to function within a stepfamily structure using an ideology which is more applicable to a nuclear family" (Fishman and Hamel, 1981:181).

Remarriage represents one of the "real patterns" of nuptiality that deviates from the ideal nuptiality pattern. Although the number of remarriages is increasing, most members of North American society marry with the expectation of permanence (Lamanna and Reidmann, 1981:224). First marriage remains the ideal type of marriage, and the ideal type of family is still the first-married couple and their children. Remarried families thus have an "enormous stigma to overcome because of the prevailing conventional notions of what marriages and families should be" (Messinger, 1984:151).

Remarried couples without children have less of a stigma to overcome, because their "union is usually very much like a

first marriage" (Lamanna and Reidmann, 1981:493). As Cherlin observes, "the lack of institutional support is less serious when neither spouse has a child from a previous marriage" (1978:642). The presence of children complicates remarriages because they create connections of responsibility - "role obligations and rights, [that is], institutional relationships - between adults, and families of adults" (Goode, 1956:207). These role obligations and rights, however, are less clearly delineated than in families of first-marriages. Whereas the nuclear family ideology prescribes roles between men and women, and between adults and children, stepfamily members "must be more flexible and design roles appropriate to their lives" (Fishman and Hamel, 1981:199). Remarried families are thus a "normless norm" (Lamanna and Reidmann, 1981:497). Remarried families' reliance on an inappropriate nuclear family ideology is indicative of the general absence of norms specific to remarried family life (Mills, 1984:365). Such reliance, however, results in many problems that are common in remarried families. These problems are: role ambiguity; intrarole conflict; and stepchildren's hostility toward their stepparents. Furthermore, the lack of an appropriate kinship terminology and the absence of clear legal definitions regarding the status of stepparents are additional signs of the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage. According to Cherlin (1978), the higher divorce rate in remarriages is due to these ambiguities and problems, all of which are

indicators of the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage.

Role Ambiguity

The most difficult problem that remarried couples with children face is stepparenting (Lamanna and Reidmann, 1981:496). Many stepparents expect the role of stepparent to be similar to the role of parent (Fishman and Hamel, 1981:183). That is, they expect the pattern of habituated behavior associated with the role of "parent" to work in novel situations. The role of stepparent, however, differs from the role of parent in two key aspects: the degree of clarity underlying role-appropriate behavior and the degree to which the role is either ascribed or achieved (Walker and Messinger, 1979:186). Within the nuclear family there exists a fairly clear set of norms around which relationships and statuses are organized. The remarried family's situation is quite different because "there are simply no clearly defined role prescriptions concerning the rights and obligations between new spouse and partner's children" (Walker and Messinger, 1979:187). Furthermore, adult-child roles are more ascribed than achieved in the first-married family. As Walker and Messinger observe,

> traditionally the parent in a nuclear-family household is assigned a role that entails in varying degrees a certain obligation to love, support, and protect his or her offspring and the right to expect love and respect in return (1979:187).

The stepparent role, however, is a status that is achieved

(Fishman and Hamel, 1981:189). Clearly defined rights and obligations "have not been ascribed to all remarriage family role incumbents" (Walker and Messinger, 1979:187). Instead, the love and respect that parents usually expect from their children must be achieved by stepparents through individual effort.

With regard to role-appropriate behavior and expectations, stepparents and stepchildren experience the most ambiguity in the areas of discipline and affection (Kompara, 1980:72; Lutz, 1983; Robinson, 1984:382). Difficulties in discipline arise for two reasons. First, stepparents may feel uncomfortable in disciplining their stepchildren, particularly stepfathers, if the biological father is furnishing financial support. As Nye and Berado indicate, "viewed in this light, to take disciplinary action appears to be a privilege" (1973:525) which many stepfathers do not believe they are entitled to. Similarly, children may feel that only their biological father has a right to discipline them (Nye and Berado, 1973:525). Second, conflicts may arise between stepfathers and the wives as to what constitutes appropriate discipline (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:94). The giving and showing of affection is also a frequently cited problem of stepparents. For example, Robinson reports that stepfathers said they often felt uncomfortable "kissing their stepchildren and did not always enjoy playing games with them" (1984:382). On the other hand, some stepparents hold unrealistic

expectations of "instant love" (Kompara, 1980:72) and society, in fact, "seems to expect acquired parents and children to love each other in much the same way as biologically related parents and children do" (Lamanna and Reidmann, 1981:498). When children are young, the display of affection by stepparents is not as much of a problem, but when they are older, they may feel uncomfortable giving or receiving affection because they may experience feelings of divided loyalty between the stepparent and biological parent (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:68).

Intrarole Conflict

Role ambiguity often results in intrarole conflict. Intrarole conflict "concerns only a single role, but two perceptions of it" (Nye and Berado, 1973:11). For example, the perceptions of role-appropriate behavior for stepparents differ between the role incumbent and the stepchild(ren). Stepparents, particularly if they reside with their stepchildren and contribute to their maintenance (financial and otherwise), may feel that because they are assuming some responsibility for their stepchildren's upkeep, they are entitled to many parental rights, such as discipline, respect, and love. Stepchildren, however, may consider stepparents to be intruders and not substitute or additional parents, and may resist efforts to strengthen new stepfamily relationships (Fishman and Hamel, 1981:189). In addition, in the case of older stepchildren, they have already been socialized by

another set of parents, and may have parental expectations that are incongruent with those of the stepparent. Similarly, a stepparent's partner may disagree with the childrearing practices of his or her new spouse (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:94). Since stepfamily roles are less clearly defined than first-married family roles, there are bound to be many "variations in the definition of appropriate behavior in the enactment of a given role" (Nye and Berado, 1973:263), and thus, intrarole conflict will be higher in remarried than in first-married families. Ambiguous role expectations and subsequently, intrarole conflict, add stress to an already complicated situation, and "can have detrimental effects on the whole family's mental health and happiness" (Kompara, 1980:70).

Stepchildren's Hostility

Researchers cite the presence of stepchildren as the most significant stressor in remarriages (White and Booth, 1985:692). Remarriages with resident stepchildren have a higher rate of divorce than remarriages without stepchildren (White and Booth, 1985:692; Cherlin, 1978:645). Messinger reports that contemporary social scientists agree that the stress in remarriage associated with the presence of stepchildren is due to certain childrearing practices inherent in the traditional nuclear family (1984:150). Their thesis is that

> our society fosters in children an overdependence on the nuclear family which leads to their making an investment for security in their parents alone. This is a consequence of the fact that historically the nuclear family - the marital couple and their children - has been the sole support unit, internally interdependent and exclusive (Messinger, 1984:150).

The interdependency of the nuclear family poorly prepares children for divorce, and "actually inhibits their ability to establish primary ties beyond their close blood kin" (Messinger, 1984:150).

Stepchildren may idealize their natural parent unrealistically and thereby make the stepparent relationship more difficult (Kompara, 1980:71). Also, they often harbor fantasies that their original parents will reunite, and "may feel that sabotaging the new relationship can help achieve that goal" (Lamanna and Reidmann, 1981:498). As Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley note, while stepchildren usually have no say in their parent's decision to remarry, "they do have incredible power to break it up" (1987b:94). For example, they may create divisiveness between spouses and siblings by "acting in ways that accentuate differences between them ... and make uncomfortable comparisons between the two households" (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:94-95).

Kinship

The incomplete institutionalization of remarriage is also evidenced by the lack of kinship terms appropriate to remarried family members. Institutions are represented not

only by roles, but also by language (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:70). Gerth and Mills write that

> language - conceived as a sphere of symbols - is necessary to the operations of institutions. For the symbols used in institutions coordinate the roles that compose them, and justify the enactment of these roles by the members of the institution (1964:305).

No adequate terms exist for stepfamily roles. The term "stepparent" originally referred to a substitute parent who replaced a dead parent (Bohannon, 1970:119). Today, due to higher divorce rates and lower mortality rates, "stepparents" are an addition, not a replacement. Confusion thus arises in terminology, especially for children, since there are no agreed upon terms to describe the parent's spouse who is not a biological parent. Negative connotations are also associated with the term "step," which originally meant "orphan" (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:78), and the term "stepchild" has come to "be applied to anyone or anything that is mistreated or neglected" (Bernard, 1956:221). The myth of the "wicked stepmother" so prevalent in folklore "often acts as a stumbling block in the assimilation of remarriages" (Bernard, 1956:221).

As Cherlin observes, "for more extended relationships, the lack of appropriate terms is even more acute" (1978:643). For example, no clear terms exist to describe the new kin, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and stepsiblings. Their rights and obligations are even less clearly defined than those of the more immediate stepkin (Furstenberg and Spanier,

1987:134). Furthermore, members of first-married nuclear families share a common residence, whereas children of remarried families often alternate between their biological parent's household under a joint custody arrangement. What then, do they call "home" and where is their "family?" (Cherlin, 1978:644). The absence of proper terms "is both a symptom and a cause of some of the problems of remarried life" (Cherlin, 1978:644).

Law

The law, as a major institution in society, "is both a means of social control and an indicator of accepted patterns of behavior" (Cherlin, 1978:644). Family law defines the rights and duties of family members. It ignores, however, the special problems of remarried families after divorce because family law precedents assume that marriages are first marriages (Weitzman, 1974:1204). There are often no provisions, therefore, for resolving several problems of remarriage, such as

> balancing the financial obligations of husbands to their spouses and children from current and previous marriages, defining the wife's obligations to husbands and children from the new and the old marriages, and reconciling the competing claims of current and ex-spouses for shares of the estate of a deceased spouse (Cherlin, 1978:644).

The legal status of stepparent is especially confusing, because it is not formally acknowledged by any statute (Kompara, 1980:71). The ambiguity of legal rights and responsibilities between step relationships further

exemplifies the lack of cultural norm clarity (Kompara, 1980:71).

E. THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF REMARRIAGE

Remarriage is presently be an incomplete institution, but it may be in the process of becoming institutionalized (Cherlin, 1981:91; Bernard, 1956:37; Goode, 1956:211; Nett, 1988:264; Messinger, 1984:232). Remarriage is incompletely institutionalized because remarried family roles are ill-defined, no commonly agreed upon kinship terminology exists, and the law is ambiguous with regard to the rights and obligations of stepparents. Several aspects of remarriage, however, indicate that remarriage may be in the process of becoming institutionalized. That is, some of the prerequisites necessary for remarriage to be institutionalized are presently in the process of being met. These aspects or prerequisites are that: remarriage serves a function for an increasing number of people; the attitudes and values toward remarriage (and divorce) are becoming more favorable and norms are in the process of being created; and finally, the legal institution, particularly common law, is beginning to address some of the legal issues that pertain to remarried families.

Function

Institutions exist because they satisfy personal needs, societal needs, or both. They develop in response to needs and "change their form through continued group behavior and

changing needs" (Koenig and Bayer, 1981:84). Because of the emphasis in our society on romantic love, remarriage may satisfy divorced individual's needs for intimacy within a socially and legally sanctioned relationship. It also serves the function of alleviating the emotional and financial stress that lone parents face after divorce. In a society with a high standard of living, remarriage is almost an economic necessity, especially for females, since almost half of lone-parent families headed by females live below the poverty line (Wilson, 1986:23). Remarriage also provides two resident parents for children, which reduces the energy allocation involved for the biological parent. In comparison to lone-parent families, the remarried family more closely approximates the 'norm' of family structure, and therefore is less subject to social disapproval.

Attitudes, Values, and the Creation of Norms

Remarried families suffer from a lack of institutionalized guidelines with which to solve many common problems of their remarried life (Cherlin, 1978:642). Dyer and Urban state that

> [i]n a normless situation, members of a group will form new norms to direct behavior. Social change has broken down the old family norms in [North] American society. New norms will be formulated around predominant values (1958:53).

A predominant value in our society is romantic love as a basis for marriage and its endurance. This value denotes that marriage is desirable, that it should be satisfying for both

partners, and that it should be able to be terminated if it does not conform to one's ideal expectations. High divorce rates measure how unwilling people are to put up with dissatisfaction (Quale, 1988:205). As emotional elements become more significant in marital relationships, "the tendency to seek divorce grows also" (Quale, 1988:205). It appears that commitment becomes more conditional as individual discretion and emotional gratification become more valued (Furstenberg and Spanier, 1987:53). Contemporary attitudes indeed appear to be more receptive toward divorce (Weitzman, 1974:1203) and remarriage (Bernard, 1956:37). The cultural emphasis on romantic love as the basis for marriage has resulted in more tolerant attitudes toward divorce and acts as a pressure toward remarriage. Individuals who seek to terminate their marriages and search for a more satisfying relationship that more closely approximates the ideal are no longer stigmatized as they once were (Cherlin, 1981:46). Social disapproval thus no longer acts (for most individuals) as a barrier to divorce. According to Dyer and Urban's paradigm of theoretical analysis (1958:53), new family norms can be expected to be formed in our society around remarried families. In fact, several years ago, Bernard indicated that

> step by step, we are reshaping the rules - legal, religious, and conventional - in order to institutionalize not only the dissolution of marriages but also the creation of remarriages (1956:37).

The amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular

magazines and academic journals has increased substantially (Bernard, 1956:37; Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985) and "discussion groups, adult education courses, newsletters, and self-help books for remarried parents have proliferated" (Cherlin, 1978:647). These all help remarried families to deal with their problems and aid them in establishing norms with which to conduct their everyday lives. Therefore, they are an indirect indicator of the institutionalization of remarriage.

The Legal Institution

As noted earlier, no specific provisions in the legal system exist for second and subsequent marriages, even though their numbers are increasing and community attitudes toward divorce and remarriage appear to be receptive. Legal norms should conform to sociological reality (Weitzman, 1974:1197), but there is typically a lag "between changes in community attitudes and the incorporation of such change into legal ... codes of behavior" (Bernard, 1956:36). In most American states, unless stepparents adopt their stepchildren, they are not bound to support them (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:126). Canada and ten American states, however, "have altered their legal doctrine with regard to a stepparent's duty to support stepchildren who are living with them, a doctrine called in loco parentis" (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:126). In loco parentis, or "in the place of parent" (Black, 1979:708) exists when the stepparent houses and supports his or her stepchild(ren), and results in him or her

being "charged, factitiously, with a parent's rights, duties, and responsibilities" (Black, 1979:708).

This thesis will be examining an indirect indicator of the institutionalization of remarriage, that is, media attention directed toward remarried families. It is hypothesized that such media attention, in the form of self-help articles in popular literature, may aid remarried families in the process of creating norms. Increases in the amount of attention paid to remarried families by popular literature may also indicate that attitudes toward remarriage and remarried families are becoming more tolerant. Because the hypotheses tested in this thesis serve as indirect indicators of the institutionalization of remarriage, it is important to emphasize that this research is exploratory, and constitutes only one method of ascertaining whether or not remarriage may be in the process of institutionalization.

F. CONCLUSION

Remarriage is patterned, in that most divorced individuals remarry. A prerequisite of the institutionalization of patterns of behavior, such as remarriage, is that it fulfils a need that members of society have. The proliferation of self-help books and support groups is an indirect indicator of such need fulfilment. The needs of remarried family members are organized around a value, or a cluster of values, and they may result in the creation of

norms with which remarried family members can conduct their behavior and design an appropriate kinship terminology. The law, as an indicator of accepted patterns of behavior, may eventually resolve many of the ambiguities surrounding remarried families by specifying the rights and obligations of remarried family members to each other. The above factors indicate that the process of the institutionalization of remarriage may be underway.

The increase in divorces and remarriages has caused some researchers to question the durability of the institution of marriage as it is traditionally perceived by society's members. For example, Blumstein and Schwartz believe that "marriage is an institution that seems to be in danger of collapse" (1983:318-319). They question whether marriage is becoming less of an institution because of the prevalence of divorce, new egalitarian roles for husbands and wives, and the increase in alternate living arrangements, such as cohabitation and different marital forms (Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983:319). Similarly, John Watson declared in 1927 that "in fifty years, unless there is some change, the tribal custom of marriage will no longer exist" (cited in Burgess and Wallin, 1974:127). Carle Zimmerman, in describing the modern nuclear family, wrote in 1947 that "there is little left now within the family or the moral code to hold this family together" (1947:796). Burgess and Wallin believe that the family is in transition from an institution to a relationship

family is in transition from an institution to a relationship of companionship (1974:135). Whereas previously the family was held together through institutional sources of unity, such as the unchallenged authority of the husband and the subordination of the wife, today the democratic family has emerged, which "emphasizes the equality of the husband and wife [and] their consensus in arriving at decisions" (Burgess and Wallin, 1974:136).

Because the patriarchal authority structure has to a great extent eroded and gender roles have become less differentiated does not mean that the family as an institution is declining. Companionship may have replaced the traditional institutional sources of family unity that Burgess and Wallin believed were necessary to define the family as an institution, but as Cherlin indicates, "the equalitarian pattern may be as firmly institutionalized now as the traditional pattern was in the past" (1978:635-636). The modern nuclear family now creates its own unity from interpersonal relationships rather than from social expectations (Burgess and Wallin, 1974:135).

Increased longevity has extended the marital life-span. Some researchers believe that the increase in the divorce rate is due partially to increased longevity (Eisenstein, 1956:12; Robinson and McVey, 1985:106). For example, as one researcher notes, high divorce rates appear to indicate that

> longevity has now exposed for human study the fact that the human race has never been mature enough for enduring marriages, a fact which used to be obscured by early death (Eisenstein, 1956:12).

In a less contentious vein, Robinson and McVey suggest that a "tolerance limit" to marriages exists (1985:106). In earlier periods, the dissolution of marriages occurred through death. Robinson and McVey surmise that marriages which are presently terminated through divorce may have previously ended due to the death of a spouse, had the partners lived in an earlier time period. Conversely, marriages "which would have dissolved in earlier periods due to death, would, if the partners lived in present times, currently dissolve due to divorce" (Robinson and McVey, 1985:106). Previously, spousal death was a mechanism by which the "tolerance limit" was kept in check. As a result of increased life expectancy, other mechanisms have developed to permit the dissolution of marriages. These mechanisms are more liberal divorce laws, reduced stigma attached to the divorced, and the increasing economic independence of women, which lessens their dependence upon marriage for economic and social survival (Robinson and McVey, 1985:106). High divorce rates, therefore, presently accomplish some of the reshuffling of marriages which previously occurred as a consequence of early mortality.

3. HISTORY OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

A. INTRODUCTION

Divorce is not unique to western, industrialized nations, nor is it a modern invention. Forms of marital dissolution, whether formal or informal, are universal in the cultures of the world (Kirkpatrick, 1955:513; Goode, 1982:150). What is unprecedented are the rates of divorce in industrialized countries. Although remarriage is not new, widescale remarriage after divorce is a relatively new phenomenon. Previously, the divorced comprised quite a small proportion of the pool of eligibles for remarriage. Most remarriages followed widowhood and not divorce. Because of lower life expectancies, most families spent some part of their lives as members of remarried families. Many families today also face the possibility of being remarried family members, in part due to the impact of divorce legislation. This chapter will examine the history of divorce legislation in Canada and the United States, since liberalized divorce laws play a significant role in increasing the pool of eligibles for remarriage.

As noted above, present remarriage rates do not differ much from rates in previous centuries, because life expectancy was much lower and hence, widowhood was likely. Previously, however, remarriage followed institutionalized patterns in many cultures. This chapter will provide a brief cross-cultural comparison of institutionalized patterns of

remarriage to illustrate this point. It will also argue that remarriage was more institutionalized not only because of the prevalence of widowhood but also because the functions of and relations between family members were more economic than sentimental. Chapter Three will conclude with a comparison of the status of the divorced versus the widowed in contemporary society.

B. HISTORY OF DIVORCE LEGISLATION IN CANADA

In contemporary society, divorce rates generally provide a fairly accurate indication of marital breakdown. Although many couples continue to exist in empty-shell and/or abusive marriages (for religious, economic, or other reasons), the divorce rate indicates that the number of people who will not tolerate such marriages is increasing. Prior to the Canadian divorce law reforms of 1968, however, divorce rates were actually a poor indication of the actual rate of marriage breakdown due to "the stringent nature of the legal grounds of divorce and the lack of divorce court facilities in some provinces" (Pike, 1975:115). Whereas today, divorce is seen as a symptom of marital breakdown, previously, divorce tended to be seen as a "moral disease undermining the stability of the family and shaking the foundations of the nation" (Pike, 1975:116). Such a view, as Pike (1975) explains, was derived from matrimonial law and thereby canon law, which "leaned towards the disease notion of divorce in so far as one of

their major purposes was to make divorces difficult to obtain" (Pike, 1975:116).

The English Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 became the basis of divorce law in most of Canada from 1870 to 1930 (Pike, 1975:117). According to this act, adultery provided the only legal ground for divorce in Canada (except for Nova Scotia, which included the ground of cruelty). While a husband could be successful in getting a divorce on the grounds of his wife's adultery, prior to 1925, a wife could not sue for divorce until she showed her unfaithful husband to also be guilty of other aggravating acts, such as desertion or extreme cruelty (Pike, 1975:117-118). This double standard arose out of the Victorian belief that

> a husband's extramarital affairs were a natural occurrence. It also showed the married wife to have few legal rights, that she was not much more than property (Peters, 1987:143).

In 1925, a new Canadian Divorce Act was passed which allowed women to petition for divorce on the basis of their partner's infidelity without any of the accompanying qualifiers (Cohen, 1984:167). As a result of the removal of this double standard, the proportion of wives among divorce petitioners increased from 47% during 1922-1925 to an annual average of 60% during the 1930s (Pike, 1975:118).

Although the 1925 reform gave women a greater degree of legal access to divorce, the law of domicile represented another obstacle to divorce for women. Whereas a man could

petition for a divorce from wherever he lived, the law of domicile "obliged a wife whose husband had deserted her and moved to another province to petition for divorce in the province to which he had moved" (Pike, 1975:118). This law in effect forced wives with limited finances to remain married to permanently absent spouses. Its appeal in 1930 "allowed a wife to sue for divorce in the province where she was domiciled at the time of desertion" (Pike, 1975:118), but only if she could prove that her husband was guilty of adultery as well as of wilful desertion (Peters, 1987:143).

The lack of geographical accessibility to divorce courts also characterized the history of early Canadian divorce law. Ontario did not gain the authority to establish its own divorce court until 1930, and Prince Edward Island did not establish one until 1945 (Peters, 1987:143). Both Newfoundland and Quebec did not acquire divorce courts until 1968 (Pike, 1975:119). In these provinces, the only recourse for individuals seeking divorces was to apply to the federal government in Ottawa (Peters, 1987:143). As Peters notes, the lack of geographical accessibility "was a strong deterrent to pursuing a legal divorce, particularly for the poor" (1987:143).

Under such constraints, some couples sought other solutions. Certain "techniques of evasion" of the law were the fabrication of the grounds of divorce and migratory divorce actions. Regarding the first technique, it is unclear

how many couples actually arranged for the fabrication of an act of adultery where none had actually taken place, but it was "common enough prior to 1968 to warrant frequent headshaking comment in the popular press" (Pike, 1975:120). Couples with financial means could seek a "migratory" divorce by establishing temporary residence in an American or Mexican jurisdiction that offered divorce on a wide variety of grounds (Pike, 1975:121). Although these foreign divorces were not legally valid in Canada[1], and therefore did not appear in the national divorce statistics, if they had, "then the divorce rate in Canada prior to the change in the law [in 1968] would have been perhaps two or three times higher than it actually was" (Pike, 1975:121). Couples whose religious or moral nature prevented them from engaging in such patterns of evasion could obtain a legal separation, but were not legally free to remarry (Pike, 1975:121). Another legal alternative was annulment, but it has been rarely utilized in Canada (Pike, 1975:122).

The popularity of techniques of evasion indicate just how much "out of tune the law had become for large segments of the population" (Pike, 1975:120). As Pike notes,

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[1]Even when legally invalid in Canada, as Pike notes, a foreign divorce "often constituted a means of gaining widespread social acceptance for a common-law union" (1975:121), since such divorces were usually followed by a remarriage to a new partner before the couple left the jurisdiction in which the divorce was obtained.

> a law which allowed divorce on the basis of a single act of infidelity but forbade it even where there was evidence of extreme cruelty or prolonged desertion, was increasingly viewed as being out of tune with contemporary conceptions of the true meaning and purpose of marriage (1975:120).

Divorce reform began with the passing of the 1968 Divorce Act. This Divorce Act provided a greater variety of grounds for divorce. Petitions for divorce could be made on the basis of marital offense or marriage breakdown. The grounds for matrimonial offenses were broadened to include physical and mental cruelty in addition to adultery (Peters, 1987: 168). Although the adversarial concept remained, the relatively novel concept of marriage breakdown was a revolutionary addition to the 1968 Divorce Act because the law now "allowed a sort of no-fault divorce based upon a three-year separation of the spouses" (Cohen, 1984:168). Other grounds for marriage breakdown were addiction to drugs or alcohol and desertion by the petitioner for not less than five years.

A large proportion of Canadians divorcing used the grounds of three years' separation. This was a type of no-fault divorce in that "the courts [did] not place guilt or blame upon either of the partners" (Peters, 1987:145). From 1968 to 1983, 22-33% of Canadians divorcing used the three-year separation as grounds (Peters, 1987:145). Although these grounds were fairly easily processed (Peters, 1987:145), some people found the waiting period too lengthy. Even after the introduction of no-fault divorce, adultery was used by 28.5%

to 31% of all petitioners annually (Peters, 1987:145). Critics of the 1968 Divorce Act pointed out that "these cases were really consent divorces disguised to allow the spouses to avoid the three-year waiting period" (Morton, 1990:213). They further argued that the adversarial process only aggravates existing tensions between the spouses by "reviving an unhappy history and providing them with a public forum in which to continue their quarrel" (Morton, 1990:213). They recommended that "a divorcing couple and not the courts should determine the status of the marriage decision" (Peters, 1987:150).

The Divorce Act of 1985 reflects the influence of the criticisms described above. Although it retained vestiges of the notion of fault, the new legislation "accepts the position that divorce should not be awarded on fault grounds" (Morton, 1990:214). The Act, which went into effect June 1986, provides only one ground for divorce: marriage breakdown. The 1985 Divorce Act defines marriage breakdown in terms of three situations. First is mental or physical cruelty, which, as previously mentioned, must be adequately substantiated (Peters, 1987:151). Second, divorce may be obtained on the grounds of adultery. As in the past, "proof of fault immediately entitles the spouses to a divorce; there is no waiting period" (Morton, 1987:215). The most significant change in the law is the reduction of the separation period to one year. In this ruling, "the law seeks to reduce the stress of marital differences and their duration ... [and] to honour

the intent of the applicants" (Peters, 1987:151). While the 1985 Divorce Act simplifies divorce procedures, and would thus appear to increase divorce rates, lawyers are now obliged to inform their clients that marriage counselling is available, and both lawyers and judges "are required to ascertain that recourse to reconciliation has been made"
(Peters, 1987:151). These obligations indicate that there is still a high regard for the institution of marriage and that "divorce law reform should still be able to preserve the family unit, if at all possible, by providing an effective attempt at reconciliation" (Cohen, 1984:171). At the same time, the new law recognizes that "the assumption that married life has personal happiness as its aim has come to be widely accepted" (Goode, 1971:310).

C. HISTORY OF DIVORCE LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Prior to liberalization from English rule, adultery was the primary justification for marital dissolution in colonial America. As in Canada (prior to 1925), only the wife's infidelity provided sufficient grounds for divorce (Halem, 1980:18). Once liberated from English rule, the former colonies were "free to revise or create their own marriage and divorce laws" (Halem, 1980:18). In the North, the courts increasingly assumed jurisdiction. By placing domestic affairs under civil domination, various state courts (beginning with New Hampshire in 1791, Rhode Island in 1798,

Vermont in 1799, Massachusetts in 1811, and Connecticut in 1843) were able to extend the grounds of divorce to include bigamy, desertion, impotence, and extreme cruelty, in addition to adultery (Halem, 1980:18). Furthermore, such courts issued decrees for absolute divorce, which would permit the innocent parties to remarry. The middle states, however, were "notably less daring than their northern neighbors" (Halem, 1980:18). For example, until 1966, New York had only one legal ground for divorce, adultery (McKenry and Price, 1988:93). The South "continued to place responsibility for divorce within the legislature instead of the courts" (Halem, 1980:19).

The ecclesiastical conceptions of fault were embodied in statutory divorce codes well into the second half of the twentieth century. The strict application of divorce laws in the United States was circumvented in the same ways as they were in Canada before the liberalization of divorce laws: through migratory divorce (for example, to the Dominican Republic, France, Haiti, and Mexico), and through the perjury and collusion of individual petitioners regarding the grounds for divorce (Halem, 1980:234). Clearly, divorce reform was necessary.

In the 1960s, the "movement toward statutory reform in the direction of 'no-fault' divorce was inaugurated" (Halem, 1980:234). California was the first state to abolish traditional fault grounds. The Family Law Act of 1969 (which went into effect January 1, 1970) authorized the courts to grant the dissolution of a marriage on the grounds of

'irreconcilable differences,' which "have caused the irremedial breakdown of the family," and incurable insanity (Eshleman, 1988:595). Soon after, other states displaced the traditional grounds for fault (adultery, desertion, cruelty) with grounds such as "irretrievably broken marriages," "no reasonable likelihood of preserving the marriage," or "dissolution" - concepts "not laden with individual blame or fault" (Price and McKenry, 1988:97).

By 1974, thirty-nine states had some no-fault provisions; twenty-five states adopted the no-fault principle of marital breakdown, either as a sole ground for divorce, or in addition to fault, and fourteen states had some no-fault provisions such as separation or incompatibility (Wright and Stetson, 1978:576). Since then, all states adopted some form of no-fault divorce legislation (Eshleman, 1988:596). While divorce rates have increased with the introduction of no-fault divorce laws in both Canada and the United States, as Cherlin observes, "the spread of no-fault laws seems to have been a reaction to changing attitudes and to the increase in divorce, not a stimulus to more divorce" (1981:49).

D. A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF INSTITUTIONALIZED PATTERNS OF REMARRIAGE

The remarriage of the divorced followed institutionalized controls before the liberalization of divorce laws in both Canada and the United States in that remarriage for the spouse deemed to be "at fault" for the divorce was legally void.

Remarriage for the widowed, too, "has long been subject to institutional controls almost as clearly defined and as binding as those governing first marriages" (Bernard, 1956:26). These controls range from prohibition to mandatory remarriage, and in some cultures, strict prescriptions apply as to whom the widowed may marry (Bernard, 1956:26).

Proscriptions against Remarriage

Some cultures strictly prohibit remarriage. The now outlawed suttee in India, which "required that a widow die on her husband's funeral pyre" (Bernard, 1956:26) is illustrative of such an example. Remarriage was also prohibited by the early Christian Fathers (Queen et al., 1985:144) on the basis that second marriages constituted a breach of the promise made during first marriages. Although some cultures do not actually forbid remarriage, they do deeply disapprove of it. In Spain, the remarriage of widowed women is considered to be disgraceful (Bernard, 1956:26). In pre-modern China, if a widow of the gentry remarried, she lost the respect of her children, "who, indeed, spoke of themselves as having no mother at all" (Bernard, 1956:27).

Prescriptions toward Remarriage

In some cultures, remarriage of the widowed is required. The ancient Hebrew customs of the levirate and the sororate are examples of customs that prescribed remarriage. According

to the levirate, if a widow was childless, she was "expected to marry her deceased husband's brother and bare him a son, who would be regarded as the descendant and heir of the dead man" (Queen et al., 1985:115). According to the sororate, a widower was obliged to marry the sisters of his deceased wife, whereupon the sisters succeeded to the dead wife's status (Bernard, 1956:27). Other cultures do not require widows and widowers to remarry but strongly encourage remarriage. Islamic culture encourages widow remarriage (Husain, 1976:159). Childless widows are encouraged to remarry in order to procreate, and widows with children are encouraged to remarry so that they will be better able to support them (Husain, 1976:162).

Permission

Bernard observes that between the two extremes of institutional control regarding remarriage, (that is, proscription and prescription), "lie institutional patterns that permit remarriage under certain conditions but do not require it" (1956:26). Such was the case during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe and America, where remarriage was common and socially approved (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987a:4). Lower life expectancies for both men and women decreased the number of years that a first-married couple lived in matrimony. For example, Shorter's historical research reveals that in Europe, couples usually

wed in their late twenties, and "could look forward to perhaps five or ten years together before death would carry one of them away" (1975:26). Similarly, Quale found that French peasant couples in the eighteenth century could expect an average of only twelve years of marriage before one spouse died, and it was not until the nineteenth century that average marriage durations surpassed twenty years for western Europeans and North Americans (Quale, 1988:18-19).

Widowers, and to a lesser extent, widows, were quick to remarry (Shorter, 1975:26). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, remarriages accounted for 25-30% of all marriages in Europe and America (Aries, 1981:31; Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987a:3). More widowers than widows remarried, but a high sex ratio made remarriage prospects favorable for women in western settlements in America (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987a:3). In Paris during the seventeenth century, one-third of all marriages were remarriages for one of the partners, and "one-fifth of all households would contain children of different marriages" (Shorter, 1975:283ff). As a result of high mortality, "step-parents and stepchildren were much in evidence" (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:16) and remarried family structure was likely more complex than it is today, since families were larger (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987a:15). Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley note that remarried families more often contained stepmothers than stepfathers, since more mothers died before

rearing their children to adulthood (1987a:15).

The proportion of adults and children living in remarried families in the 1990s is similar to the rates in Europe and America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987a:3). It thus appears that the tendency to remarry was as strong in the preceding centuries as it is today. Contextually, however, the two periods are quite different, "due to the fact that divorce, not death, is the event that now precedes remarriage" (Ihinger-Tallman, 1987a:3). Also, the motivations to remarry differ. Just as Goode (1956) noted that presently, institutionalized pressures exist to push the divorced into remarriage, previously, there existed institutional patterns that pushed the widowed to remarry. Whereas for the divorced, the pressures are economic, social, cultural, and psychological in nature, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the pressures for the widowed were primarily economic.

It appears that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, economic circumstances rather than romantic love prompted widows and widowers to remarry (Sogner and Dupaquier, 1981:10; Palli, 1981:475). As Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley note,

> successful family functioning in agrarian America depended upon a division of labor that called for two adults performing quite different tasks. This traditional division of labor is not as necessary in the urban, industrialized present (1987a:16).

The death of a spouse signified more than the physical and

emotional loss of a parent or spouse; it possibly jeopardized the survival of the family.

Previously, the family was the dominant form of labour organization, and "fixed roles were allotted to its members by the division of labour" (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:87). Key roles always had to be filled, and as Mitterauer and Sieder note, peasant widows and widowers had to think of remarrying quickly "because of the requirements of the domestic economy, as well as those of the children" (1982:149). In Austrian and Central European regions, for example, "widows and widowers were either urged to remarry quickly or forced to give up the management of the farm" (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:122). If a widow had a partial claim to the property, she could retain her position of mistress by remarrying (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:167). Widowers remarried because they needed a nurse and a housekeeper (Corsini, 1981:390; Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:61), and in many instances, both artisan's and farmer's widows remarried younger journeymen who were employed in the family enterprise. Remarriage for widows "represented the only form of care in old age" (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:127). Remarriage was thus an accepted and socially approved solution to the loss of one's spouse and served as "a first line of defense, entered into in order to safeguard the continued existence of the surviving members of the household" (Sogner and Dupaquier, 1981:3).

Although the family's primary functions today are

providing emotional support to adults and the socialization of children (Cherlin, 1981:75), the family of pre-modern times "was indeed a hive of instrumental activity: of production (e.g., the 'family farm'), of schooling, ... and of care for all sorts of dependents" (Demos, 1986:17). It was not only the center of economic production, but also of social services. Although the widely held belief that 'extended families' were the predominant family form until just a century ago is, indeed, a myth (Demos, 1986:5; Coontz, 1988:18), family members were, in previous centuries, "highly dependent upon one another for material and moral support, even when they did not share the same roof" (Parr, 1982:9). With regard to dependency, most children resided, at some point in their lives, with members of their extended family (Coontz, 1988:14).

Coontz states that the "'extended' family of the proletariat functioned as a private institution to redistribute the poverty of the nuclear family by way of the kinship system" (1988:27). Families' provisions for widows and widowers included material contributions for their children's upkeep. Widows were often give the assistance of an adult male, usually the children's uncle, in raising their children until they remarried, which was very likely (Moogk, 1982:26).

Although families and their surrounding communities were strongly linked by social obligations and kin ties (Coontz,

1988:84; Demos, 1986:28), familial relationships were previously characterized by instrumental rather than affective bonds (Coontz, 1988:28). Thompson comments that

> for the vast majority throughout history, familial relationships have been intermeshed with the structures of work. Feeling may be more, rather than less, tender or intense because relations are 'economic' and critical to mutual survival (cited in Coontz, 1988:39).

Shorter (1975) further argues that familial and especially marital relationships were affectionless. What mattered was not the quality of a couple's marriage, but rather how well they performed in their expected roles. As Shorter writes,

> [w]hat was important was doing the essential work of society; grinding the grain, transmitting the property from generation to generation in an orderly way, clothing and feeding the members of the family sufficiently so that they wouldn't become a burden to the rest of the community (1975:63-64).

The strict demarcation of work assignments and sex roles helped to accomplish the emotional isolation that characterized marital relationships (Shorter, 1975:55).

Although family members were dependent upon one another for economic survival, they were less dependent upon each other emotionally (Coontz, 1988:28; Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:63). Some authors cite the instability of family composition (due to high mortality rates) as the cause of less intense personal relationships (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:60). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "strong ties between parents and children would not have

existed when 20% or more of all children born did not survive their first year of life" (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:60-61). Many children would also experience the death of one or both parents before they reached adulthood. For example, over half of the children in 17th century Virginia suffered the loss of one parent by age thirteen (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987a:6). Family composition also changed frequently, for example,

> [f]oster children might be taken in, orphans of relations or neighbours; young relations often came into the household as men- or maidservants and were then treated as children of the family (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:61).

Families also often "sent their children into service at an early age and without a great sense of loss" (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:61). In these circumstances, strong emotional bonds were less likely to form (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:61). As a result of a more fluid structure and less intense personal relationships, the remarriage of a widowed parent probably would not have led to the psychological disturbance among children as some researchers believe it does today (Mitterauer and Sieder, 1982:62). In the context of the modern family cycle, as Mitterauer and Sieder note, "the separation of parents [through divorce or death has] much more serious consequences for the children than the early loss of father or mother in former times" (1982:62).

In previous centuries, because of the economic necessity of remarriage, lower life expectancy, and less intense

familial relationships, remarriage after widowhood was quite acceptable and therefore probably had little negative impact upon family relationships. Families today are largely broken by divorce rather than death. Remarriage occurs predominantly among the divorced and not the widowed, and its documented effect upon children and family functioning appears to be rather negative. Even though institutional pressures exist to push both the divorced and widowed into remarriage (Goode, 1956), it appears that the status of the widowed is less ambiguous than the status of the divorced.

E. STATUS OF THE WIDOWED VERSUS THE DIVORCE

It is perhaps because of the recency of high divorce rates that the status of the divorced is ambiguous. In general, as Goode notes, "in divorce there is no agreed-upon set of rights and obligations that kin, friends, or even the spouse are supposed to meet" (1982:164). There are social patterns among people who divorce, but they grow out of common experiences and are not the result of specific divorce customs (Goode, 1982:164). The status of the widowed, both for self and for others, however, is completely unambiguous (Eichler, 1983:204) and their role expectations are relatively clear (Goode, 1956:210). In apparently all societies, "the death of a spouse creates an obligation for kinfolk and friends to help the bereaved person, to offer solace" (Goode, 1982:163). The widowed are encouraged to accept support and to express grief

over the loss of their spouses. Adjustment to widowhood usually occurs within a "culture of widows" (Fry and Garvin, 1987:42). A "culture of widows" exists in the form of "informal networks often formed through membership in formal organizations such as clubs or church groups" (Fry and Garvin, 1987:42). It is through the "culture of widows" that widows are reintegrated into the community. Fry and Garvin's research on the culture of widows reveals that widows are literally "grabbed" by their peers and "welcomed back to public life and to the formal organizations when they are ready" (Fry and Garvin, 1987:46).

The status of the widowed versus the divorced also differs with regard to the community evaluation of the manner in which the marriage was terminated. Bernard notes that "bereavement elicits sympathy from the community; divorce may evoke opprobrium" (1956:7). Death has always been viewed as an unwilled intrusion or tragedy, while "divorce continues to be viewed as a state that one or both parties intended" (Goode, 1982:163). 'Fault' is associated with divorce and people who divorce are likely to feel a sense of failure (Goode, 1982:163). The termination of a marriage through death, on the other hand, is usually beyond one's control. Perhaps the reason that the status of the widowed is less ambiguous than the status of the divorced is that societies are better adjusted to dealing with death as compared to divorce (Goode, 1982:163). As Goode observes, "death is

surrounded by rituals, ceremonies, and obligations" (1982:163). It is possible, however, that as divorce becomes viewed as "no fault" in character by more people, "more institutional patterns and supports will grow up around this change in status" (Goode, 1982:163).

F. REMARRIAGE OF THE WIDOWED VERSUS THE DIVORCED

Remarriage between the widowed and divorced differ primarily with regard to the impact of the former spouse on the new marriage. The obvious difference is that in remarriages that follow divorce, the former spouse is still living and "may continue to intervene actively in the new relationship" (Bernard, 1956:5). If the former spouse is an ex-wife with children, then maintenance payments may be awarded, which could place an economic burden upon the remarriage, and visitation rights may increase contact with ex-spouses. Even in situations where former spouses do not actively intervene in a remarriage, they may nevertheless exert an influence. For example, a first marriage "provides a baseline from which to judge the second marriage" (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:18). As Bernard indicates,

> [t]he first spouse may, for example, be used in a second marriage as an ally against a present husband or wife: 'no wonder John couldn't live with you!' shouts the angry spouse (1956:5).

Former living spouses may thus serve as reminders of earlier marital failures.

Remarriages that follow bereavement may also have to compete with the memory of a former spouse. In these cases, however, as opposed to the above example, rather than the former spouse being used as an ally against a present husband or wife, he or she may remain as a "perennial rival to the present one, and the previous relationship thus [constitutes] a threat to the second marriage" (Bernard, 1956:5). Unlike divorce, bereavement does not generally create hostility toward the former spouse. Instead, a chief area of potential difficulty to which the couple must adjust when at least one partner to the remarriage is a widowed person is the tendency of the widowed spouse to idealize the deceased mate (Bernard, 1956:199; Visher and Visher, 1979:29). When such idealization exists, the new spouse is at a great disadvantage in competition with the deceased spouse. Insecurity on the part of the new spouse may also result from the knowledge that their partner's first marriage was not terminated voluntarily (Bernard, 1956:199).

Research on the physical and mental health status of the divorced and widowed indicates that there is "generally more physical and mental health disturbance among the divorced than the widowed" (Kitson, cited in Eichler, 1983:205). It appears that in comparison to divorce, widowhood is somewhat easier to endure (Eichler, 1983:204). Eichler notes that

> widows, when compared with divorcees of the same age, seem to receive more support from other people than divorcees (1983:204).

It is perhaps because of such support that widows seem to be better equipped to cope with their status. For children, however, the death of one's parent is more difficult to deal with than parental divorce (Einstein, 1982:16; Visher and Visher, 1979:167). Death, as opposed to divorce , creates a clearer context for stepparents (Smith, 1990:12), but in either situation, the child remains loyal to the stepparent, if only to their memory (Smith, 1990:12).

G. CONCLUSION

One purpose of this chapter has been to examine the history of divorce legislation in Canada and the United States. In the process of this analysis, it was discovered that divorce rates prior to the liberalization of divorce laws were not an accurate reflection of rates of marital dissolution, due to the utilization of 'techniques of evasion' in both Canada and the United States. The circumvention of strict divorce laws signaled the need for reform, beginning in 1968 in Canada with the extension of divorce grounds and in 1985 with the introduction of the ground of marital breakdown. In 1970, California was the first state to enact a form of no-fault divorce legislation, and since then, all states have enacted some form of no-fault divorce legislation. Canada's Divorce Act, 1985 maintains that divorce should not be awarded on fault grounds and provides only one ground for divorce, marital breakdown (although two of the three definitions of

marital breakdown retain the notion of fault).

This chapter also provided a cross-cultural comparison of remarriage in order to illustrate that in many cultures, remarriage has long been subject to institutional controls. Such controls ranged from prohibition to prescription to mandatory remarriage. In seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe and America, remarriage rates were similar to contemporary rates, although remarriage previously followed widowhood. Since the family was primarily an economic unit that depended upon two adults performing different tasks, widowhood threatened a family's survival. Remarriage was thus a socially approved solution to the economic hardships that resulted from the loss of one's spouse.

Finally, it was argued that the status of the divorced is ambiguous while for the widowed, it is relatively clear. Role expectations for the widowed are relatively clear, whereas for the divorced, they are ambiguous; and the community evaluation of the divorced may be negative, while bereavement elicits sympathy. The remarriage of the divorced versus the widowed was compared, particularly the impact of the former spouse on the new marriage. It was concluded that both the ex-spouse and the deceased spouse may exert an equally negative influence on the remarriage.

4. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

In every society, values, or cultural configurations, are shaped by more or less distinctive patterns of behavior, or institutions. The institutions of society "include communications which are invoked in support of the network [culture] as a whole" (Lasswell, 1971:91). In fact, institutions exist "by virtue of communication and cease to exist once communication becomes totally disrupted" (Holsti, 1969:1). It follows, as Holsti indicates, that "the study of the processes and products of communication is basic to the [study] of ... institutions" (1969:1). In determining when and how changes in institutions occur, it may thus be illuminating to consider the function that communication serves with regard to social change. Specifically, this chapter is concerned with the contribution of the mass media to the institutionalization of remarriage. It therefore begins with a brief introduction to the general purpose of communication and presents three perspectives regarding the impact of the mass media on individuals and the relationship between communication content and social change. Next, a review of content analysis as a research technique is presented, since it is the means by which the hypotheses posed in this chapter will be tested. The intent of this thesis' research is then outlined, including statements of the four

hypotheses. A brief summary of previous research based on content analyses of popular literature articles on remarried families follows. Finally, the methodology is discussed, including the sample, the coding scheme, and reliability.

B. FUNCTIONS OF THE MASS MEDIA

Communication is a fundamental social process (Schramm, 1971a:5). Viewed socially, some purposes of communication, from the sender's viewpoint, are to

> share common knowledge of the environment [and to] socialize new members of society to play their roles and abide by norms and customs (Schramm, 1971a:20).

From the receiver's viewpoint, one objective of social communication is, among other objectives, to "acquire skills and knowledge necessary to live comfortably in society" (Schramm, 1971a:20). Communication, therefore, in part consists of information. Schramm defines information as "any content that reduces uncertainty or the number of possible alternatives in a situation" (1971a:13). Information thus "helps one structure or organize those aspects of the environment which are relevant to a situation in which [one] must act" (Roberts, 1971:350).

As a form of mass communication, the mass media are unique in that they do not directly involve interpersonal interaction (Elkin and Handel, 1972:131). They are also unique in that the mass media constitute the broadest transmitter of information. The mass media can and do make available large

amounts of information, which include knowledge of the environment and societal norms. It is because of this function that the mass media in modern, industrialized countries "probably constitute the main cultural institution" (Rosengren, 1984:24).

Although there is general agreement that the mass media transmit information to society's members, considerable disagreement exists among communication scholars as to what the impact of mass communication is (Wilson, 1981:231). Disagreements regarding the purpose of the mass media pertain to perceived effects of mass communication on individuals' attitudes, values, and behavior, and the relationship between content and social change. In other words, do the media ignore, reflect, or create social change? The study of social change and the effects of the mass media produces three perspectives: first, the media as reinforcers of the existing social structure; second, the media as reflectors of culture; and third, the media as agents of social change. According to the first perspective, "the media socialize the audience through the models, values, ideas, and attitudes conveyed" (Wilson, 1981:232). Presumably, the mass media represent traditional values. Documentations of the media's role as reinforcers of the status quo include studies on media under-representation of minority groups and on stereotyped presentations of women. Researchers who subscribe to this view of the media are concerned primarily about the media's

role as an agent of socialization, particularly with regard to the effects of pornography and violence in the media, and the impact of stereotyped presentations of women and minority groups (Wilson, 1981:232). The underlying assumption is that the media create and sustain definitions of reality (Wilson, 1981:233), which serve to reinforce the status quo and thereby ignore social change. It is important to emphasize that "the underlying assumption in these studies has not yet been verified" (Wilson, 1981:233).

The second perspective assumes that media content reflects dominant social values, interests, and concerns (Tannenbaum, 1984:100) and can thus be used to gauge social change (Wilson, 1981:231). According to this perspective, mass media content is an indicator of the state of a culture (Hawkins and Pingree, 1984:317). The analysis of mass media content is undertaken "in order to assay changes in norms, values, and belief elements of culture over time" (Peterson and Hughes, 1984:443). Proponents of this view consider the media to be "gatekeepers" of the culture (Hirsch, 1981:187; Rosengren, 1984:24). Publication thus represents "community consciousness" (Gerbner, 1969:126). Although this perspective appears plausible, mass media content is the combination of the "creative energies of writers, editors, and advertisers" (Wilson, 1981:233). As Tannenbaum indicates,

> [t]hose involved in the production of cultural fare ... willingly admit that they deliberately select what to feature. ... Under these circumstances, it becomes particularly difficult to seriously consider such work as valid cultural expressions (1984:100-101).

The relationship between culture and media content is not a simple one.

The third perspective contends that "the mass media can directly manipulate public opinion or otherwise bring about social change by altering the beliefs of the audience" (Wilson, 1981:233). This perspective asserts that the media are "molders" of society (Rosengren, 1981:252), that is, they create public opinion and accordingly shape human behavior. The perspective of the mass media as an agent of social control is without empirical support (Wilson, 1981:233; Roberts, 1971:382; Schramm, 1971b:519). Although the mass media do "have the power to shape our conception of norms for behavior in those situations" (Schramm, 1971b:521), people are selective in their attention to the media and tend to interpret information according to their own beliefs, values, and norms (Roberts, 1971:382). Furthermore, mass communications "are not the most effective means for influencing immediate change of established beliefs, opinions, attitudes, or values" (Roberts, 1971:377). It would be a mistake to conceive of the media as anything more than a contributing influence to social change.

Because no consensus has been reached regarding the

relationship between the mass media and society does not mean that the possibility of a relationship should be ignored. It is obvious that each perspective cannot by itself explain the society-mass media relationship. Perhaps under some conditions, some mass media reflect social change, while under other conditions they function as reinforcers of the status quo, and yet under other conditions function as agents of some change (Rosengren, 1981:248). For example, as noted earlier, the mass media are not very effective in influencing immediate change in established beliefs, opinions, attitudes, or values, so in this sense they reinforce the status quo. The mass media may, however, "have a great deal to do with how we structure the world over the long term, and with how we organize new aspects of the image, form new opinions and beliefs" (Roberts, 1971:377).

As noted earlier, media content is largely the product of what writers create, editors select, and advertisers endorse. For example, regarding magazine articles, characteristics of content reflected are likely those that are most evident to the content creators and "which may be readily incorporated into the themes of magazine articles" (Wilson, 1981:243). In their selection of content, magazine editors may not consciously choose to reflect social change. They do, however, "feel a need to be contemporary and this has the effect of reflecting large-scale change" (Wilson, 1981:243). Because the media "reflect aspects of change which are most

pervasive" (Wilson, 1981:243), it appears that the media are more like lagging mirrors of social structure than direct reflectors of culture. While public belief of the prevalence of some aspect of social change parallels agency statistics (Rosengren, 1981:251), the results of a study by Hubbard, DeFleur, and DeFleur (1975) show that especially in the emergence phase of social change, the media "play a role in shaping conceptions of the importance of the problem" (cited in Rosengren, 1981:251).

When change occurs in social structures, culture trails the social structure, producing a "cultural lag" (Namenwirth, 1984:94). Thus, while the media may reflect change, they do not instigate it. The media may, however, by reflecting social change, act as a contributing influence to social change, by raising awareness to the change and stimulating action. Schramm cites the civil rights movement as an example of the mass media's ability to promote social change. He points out that

> the struggle for minority rights would not have developed as rapidly or in the manner that it did had it not been for mass communications ... the mass communication media certainly served to inform people all across the nation that the forces for change were operative, that the time to act had come (1971b:520).

The relationship between the media and individuals with regard to social change is a dialectical one, as is the relationship between any institution and individuals.

Individuals themselves instigate social change, and the

mass media institution, in its need to be contemporary, reflects that change when it becomes statistically significant. Because media coverage of a particular topic imparts a kind of "validity to whatever is presented" (Schramm, 1971b:521), mass communications "have the power to shape our impressions of many situations and our conception of norms for behavior in those situations" (Schramm, 1971b:521). The media institution thus generally reinforces society's dominant values and structures, but reflects aspects of social change when they become prevalent, and such coverage may in turn stimulate changes in conceptions and behavior.

The content of forms of popular literature, such as magazines, "reflects many forms of contemporary collective behavior" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:309). As a form of popular literature, magazines "express a world of changing behavior patterns, in which ... the new [patterns] are still in a stage of transition" (Merrill and Eldredge, 1952:309). The coverage of new social trends by forms of popular literature may function as a primary source of information for a number of readers (Schramm, 1971b:521). As such, it may influence public attitudes and behavior. In addition, by reflecting contemporary trends in attitudes and behavior, the content of popular literature may be used as an index of the attitudes, interests, values, and mores of a population (Berelson, 1954:503) and may thus be used to measure social change over time. As Weber indicates, "social change is

reflected in a variety of texts, including magazines" (1984:301). Social Change may thus be ascertained by analyzing the content of literature over periods of time. Content analysis also provides the basis from which inferences about the characteristics, producers, and effects of popular literature may be made.

C. CONTENT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The use of content analysis as a research tool dates to the beginning of the twentieth century (Holsti, 1969:20), but content analysts admit that evidence of sophisticated analysis of "religious texts and concepts [dates] as far back as 1744" (Carney, 1972:27). Historically, the label "content analysis" has been "primarily associated with research in the field of journalism" (Stone and Dunphy, 1966:21). Other disciplines, however, such as sociology, anthropology, political science, literature, history, and psychology have increasingly made use of content analysis (Holsti, 1969:21; Stone and Dunphy, 1966:21). An important stimulus to the use of content analysis occurred during the 1930s through Lasswell's work. Concerned with problems of public opinion and propaganda, Lasswell's interest in mass communication prompted the development of new procedures and categories within the field of content analysis (Berelson, 1954:490). A major development occurred in the 1950s with the publication of Berelson's Content Analysis

(1954) which brought content analysis "widespread attention, and enabled systematic, focused analysis to proceed" (Carney, 1972:28). Today, "content analysis is one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences" (Krippendorff, 1980:7) because it seeks to understand data "as symbolic phenomena and to approach their analysis unobtrusively" (Krippendorff, 1980:7).

Definition

Various researchers have proposed formal definitions of content analysis (Holsti, 1969:2-3). For example, Weber defines content analysis as "a research methodology that utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (1985:9). To Budd et al., it is "a tool for observing and analyzing the overt communication behavior of selected communicators" (1967:2). The definition that researchers have more frequently cited is that of Berelson. He defines content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1954:489). Although this is a satisfactory definition if interpreted liberally, it makes no provision for the qualitative description of communication (Cartwright, 1965:424), nor the analysis of latent aspects of communication (Holsti, 1969:5).

Holsti and Stone provide a more comprehensive definition of content analysis. They define content analysis as "any

research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text" (Stone, 1966:5). They then separately analyze each component of their definition. Holsti and Stone assert that the phrase "for making inferences" is the most important element in the definition of content analysis (Stone, 1966:5). The content of communication is the basis for inferring characteristics of the author, the social situation in which it is produced, the message itself, and the audience to which the message is directed (Weber, 1985:9). Communication content is assumed to not only reflect cultural characteristics but also to direct action. The document itself "becomes a pivot for further discourse and action; inferences and predictions may be made about its effects" (Stone, 1966:7). The phrase "identifying specified characteristics" refers to the process of coding content into categories, which "serves as a basis for drawing inferences" (Stone, 1966:9). "Systematic and objective" are aspects most stressed by content analysts. 'Objective' indicates that "the procedure should be explicit, one that can be replicated exactly by other analysts" (Stone, 1966:11), and 'systematic' means that "all the relevant content is to be analyzed in terms of all the relevant categories" (Berelson, 1954:489). Holsti and Stone emphasize content "within text" because they believe that

> [m]any important changes of society and of the people who live in it are richly documented by text information. Text often becomes the most important resource for testing hypotheses about changes over the years (Stone, 1966:12).

The final component of their definition, "research technique," emphasizes that "content analysis is carried out in the context of a research design" (Stone, 1966:13). A good research design

> makes explicit and integrates procedures for selecting a sample of data for analysis, content categories and the units to be placed into the categories, comparisons between categories, and the classes of inference which may be drawn from the data (Holsti, 1969:27).

A content analyst's research design must answer the six important elements of the question, "who says what, to whom, how, with what effect, and why?" (Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool, 1952:12; Holsti, 1969:24).

Purposes of Content Analysis

Content analysis can be used for many purposes. Basically, researchers use content analysis to make inferences about the content of communication, the producers of content, and the effects of content. Berelson provides the most detailed summary of the uses of content analysis (Cartwright, 1965:424). He designates three broad approaches to the study of communication content: the characteristics of content, the causes of content, and the consequences of content. Each approach "may be classified according to the question and

purpose of the research" (Holsti, 1969:43). The "characteristics of content" approach leads one to focus either on the substance or form of the content. Regarding substance, content analysis is "used most frequently to describe the attributes of messages" (Holsti, 1969:27). The question posed by the analysis of content substance is "what" message is contained in the communication material?

The three main purposes of analyzing content substance are: first, to describe trends in communication content; second, to relate known characteristics of sources to messages they produce; and third, to audit communication content against standards (Holsti, 1969:43). Researchers study the form or style of the content in order to analyze techniques of persuasion. They ask "how" the producers of content are able to influence attitudes (Holsti, 1969:59). Characteristics of content are also analyzed in order to ascertain "to whom" the content is directed. Such analyses are often undertaken

> with a view to testing some form of the general proposition that communicators tend to cast their messages in the idiom of the intended audience. They have also tended to center on messages produced to change attitudes (Holsti, 1969:64).

The second major approach to content analysis, "producers or causes of content," consists of the attempt "to identify the intentions and other characteristics of the communicators" (Berelson, 1954:498) from the characteristics of the material itself. Researchers infer the motives, values, beliefs, and

attitudes revealed by authors from the content of their communication, presumably to learn about the culture by examining documentary evidence (Holsti, 1969:68). This approach rests upon the assumption that the materials selected for content analysis represent some segment of the culture being studied. If, in fact, the materials are representative, then one purpose of this approach is "to infer aspects of culture and cultural change" (Holsti, 1969:68). While the assumption that mass communications reflect culture is disputed by many researchers, a partial solution to the problem is "to rely on materials which meet the criteria of popularity" (Holsti, 1969:82).

With the third approach, "the audience or effects of content" approach, the content analyzed serves as a basis for inference about audience characteristics or about the effects of communication. This approach is carried out with the assumption that "the communication correctly reflects audience interest" (Cartwright, 1965:431). As such, this approach is used "to reflect attitudes, interests, and values ('cultural patterns') of population groups" (Berelson, 1954:503). Some content analysts use this approach as an index to a population's attitudes, interests, values, and mores (Berelson, 1954:505), on the basis of content produced <u>for</u> them. Thus, changes in content over time indicate cultural changes. The "audience of content" approach assumes that audience interest is at least a major contribution, if not the

major determinant of the context of communication. It must be emphasized that content

> is produced by particular agents (writers, producers, directors, editors, etc.) and it is often <u>their</u> conception of audience attitudes and values, biased as it may be, which determines what appears (Berelson, 1954:504).

In addition, special interest groups may pressure communicators enough to at least influence the nature of content (Berelson, 1954:504).

Content analysis is also used to make inferences about the effects of messages upon the recipient. Holsti asserts that "the question 'with what effect?' is, in some respects, the most important aspect of the communication paradigm" (1969:35). Perhaps the attention directed toward inferring the effects of content has to do with Schramm's assertion that

> it seems intuitively obvious that most human communications are produced with the intent of causing some effect, of shaping the minds and steering the behavior of others (1971:391).

A clear effect of the mass media in modern societies has been "their extension of people's attention areas" (Berelson, 1954:505). While individuals' attention to communication is self-selective,

> content analysis plays its part in presenting an objective and systematic picture of the communication content which is <u>available</u> for public attention, whatever the actual exposure (Berelson, 1954:506).

One purpose of inferring the effects of content, therefore, is

to reveal the focus of attention (Berelson, 1954:505).

Researchers who wish to use content analysis can choose any or all of the above approaches to analyze content. In addition, they may opt for a quantitative or qualitative method, or both. Researchers have "long debated the respective merits and uses of 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' approaches to content analysis" (George, 1959:7). For example, some analysts cite the quantification of content elements as essential to content analysis (Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool, 1952:45; Berelson, 1954:507). With this approach, analysts regard the frequency with which certain aspects occur as relevant for the purposes of inference (Berelson, 1954:507). Such content analysts praise the quantitative approach as more scientific because its attributes permit exact measurement through frequency counts and is thus a "procedure for obtaining precise, objective, and reliable data" (George, 1959:9). Other content analysts criticize the quantitative approach on the basis that more meaningful inferences can be drawn from the nonquantitative, or qualitative approach (George, 1959:7). Rather than drawing inferences on the basis of the frequency of occurrence of particular symbols or units of analysis, qualitative analysts draw inferences "on the basis of the appearance or nonappearance of attributes in messages" (Holsti, 1969:10). Qualitative analysis is a more "flexible procedure for making content-descriptive observations, or 'coding' judgements"

(George, 1959:9). Rather than rely on either the qualitative or quantitative method, Holsti suggests that the content analyst use both methods to supplement each other. He advises analysts not to assume that

> qualitative methods are insightful, and quantitative ones merely mechanical methods for checking hypotheses. The relationship is a circular one; each provides new insights on which the other can feed (1969:11).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of measurement are thus available to the content analyst.

Creating a Coding Scheme

Units of Analysis

There are two basic units of measurement in content analysis: the recording unit and the context unit. The recording unit is "the smallest body of content in which the appearance of a reference [that is, a single occurrence of a content element] is counted" (Berelson, 1954:507). The recording unit may be a word, theme, character, or item, which is "the entire article, film, book, or radio program" (Holsti, 1969:117), or space and time measures (Berelson, 1954:509). The context unit "is the largest body of content that may be searched to characterize a recording unit" (Holsti, 1969:118). The context unit needs to be large enough to provide the background within which the recording unit can be accurately judged. It may be a sentence, a paragraph, or the entire article. The recording unit may be identical to the context

unit (Holsti, 1969:118).

Categories

"Content analysis stands or falls by its categories" (Berelson, 1954:510). Three requirements of categories which are crucial to reliability and validity are that they reflect the purposes of research, are exhaustive, and mutually exclusive (Budd et al., 1967:45). The most important requirement of categories is that they "adequately reflect the investigator's research question" (Holsti, 1969:95). This means that the researcher must first clearly define the variables (conceptional definition) and second, specify the indicators to determine whether the content datum falls within the category (operational definition) (Holsti, 1969:95). The requirement that the categories be exhaustive means that "all relevant items in the sample of documents under study must be capable of being placed into a category" (Holsti, 1969:99). Finally, each category must be mutually exclusive, that is, an item should only be able to be classified under one category, not under several (Carney, 1972:168). Thus, operational definitions should be clear and precise.

Berelson (1954:512) dichotomizes categories of content analysis into "what is said" categories (substance) and "how it is said" categories (form). "What is said" categories consist of subject matter, direction, standard, values, methods, traits, actor, authority, origin, and target categories. The subject matter category is the most general

category and asks what the communication is about. It is especially useful for trend studies in various media, "with the same categories analyzed at different points in time" (Berelson, 1954:510). Studies of attitudes and values "generally use some form of direction categories to determine the author's treatment of relevant subjects" (Holsti, 1969:107). Direction categories refer to the "pro" or "con" treatment of a subject matter (Berelson, 1954:510), and usually a three-point nominal scale or seven-point semantic differential scales are employed (Holsti, 1969:107). The standard category "refers to the basis upon which the sources make judgements" (Holsti, 1969:107). Value categories examine the goals and wants found in content and are most frequently found in analyses of characters in fictional materials (Berelson, 1954:510). Closely related to the values category is the methods category, which deals "with the means employed to realize the ends" (Berelson, 1954:511). The traits category includes personal and psychological traits used to describe people (Holsti, 1969:111). Actor categories refer to the person or group who appears in a central position in the content of a document (Berelson, 1954:511). The authority category, also called "source," refers to "the person or group or object in whose name a statement is made" (Berelson, 1954:511). A few studies that identified the place of origin of communication used the origin category (Berelson, 1954:511). Finally, the target category "refers to the group

to whom the communication is particularly directed" (Berelson, 1954:511).

"How it is said" categories include form or type of communication, form of statement, intensity, and device categories (Berelson, 1954:511-512). The form or type of communication category "has to do with the ordinary distinctions among forms" (Berelson, 1954:511), such as, for example, classifying radio content into classical music, popular music, news, and so on. The form of statement category "refers to the grammatical or syntactical form in which the communication is made or to its structural components" (Berelson, 1954:511-512). The intensity category is closely related to the direction category. While the direction category determines whether the treatment of subject matter is pro or con, the intensity category measures the "strength or degree of the conviction expressed" (Budd et al., 1967:58). Content may also be classified on the basis of its rhetorical or 'propagandistic' character, under the device category (Berelson, 1954:512).

Technical Problems

Once the recording units and categories have been selected, several technical problems remain to which attention must be given: systems of enumeration, reliability, validity, and sampling. Because even "much 'qualitative' analysis is quasi-quantitative" (Berelson, 1954:512), some system of enumeration will be necessary. With quantitative analysis,

"the recording unit and unit of enumeration may be identical" (Holsti, 1969:119). The analyst simply tallies the frequency of each occurrence of a given attribute. In qualitative analyses, measurement is often based upon the appearance or absence of the attribute. The term 'qualitative analysis,' however, may be misleading because "data coded in this manner may be presented quantitatively (e.g., the percentage of items in which a given theme occurs)" (Holsti, 1969:135).

The necessity to achieve objectivity in content analysis raises the problem of reliability, which refers to the extent to which repeated measures with the same instrument on a given sample of data yield similar results (Holsti, 1969:135). Krippendorff (1980:130-133) identifies three types of reliability as pertinent to content analysis: stability, reproducibility, and accuracy. Stability is "the degree to which a process is invariant or unchanging over time" (Krippendorff, 1980:130). Researchers can ascertain stability when they code the same content more than once and do not come up with inconsistencies. Because only one person is coding, "stability is the weakest form of reliability" (Krippendorff, 1980:130).

Reproducibility, or intercoder reliability, is "the degree to which a process can be recreated under varying circumstances, at different locations, using different coders" (Krippendorff, 1980:131). Weber points out that high reproducibility is a minimum standard for content analysis

(1985:17). Accuracy refers to the "extent to which the classification of text corresponds to a standard or norm" (Weber, 1985:17). Accuracy is the strongest test of reliability available (Krippendorff, 1980:131). It is used to test the performance of human coders against an established standard coding for a particular text. Researchers seldom use accuracy in reliability assessment because "standard codings are infrequently established for texts" (Weber, 1980:17).

Validity is usually defined as "the extent to which an instrument is measuring what it intended to measure" (Holsti, 1969:143). The choice of content categories and units is especially important in enhancing the likelihood of valid inferences. As Holsti indicates,

> unless they are appropriate indices of the events, attitudes or behaviors the analyst wants to measure, inferences drawn from the findings will not be valid (1969:143).

The type of validity most relied upon by content analysts is content validity, or face validity (Holsti, 1969:143), even though it is the weakest form (Weber, 1985:19). Content validity is "based on the correspondence between the investigator's definition of a concept and his or her definition of the category that measures it" (Weber, 1985:19). Stronger types of validity are obtained with forms of external validity, where content-analytic data are compared with some external criterion. For example, a measure has high construct validity "when it correlates with other measures of the same

construct (convergent) and is uncorrelated with measures of dissimilar constructs (discriminant)" (Weber, 1985:19). Hypothesis validity occurs when a measure, in relation to other variables, "behaves" as it is expected to (Weber, 1985:20). A third form of external validity "is concerned with the ability of an instrument to predict events for which evidence is not at present available to the analyst" (Holsti, 1969:144). The final type of external validity, semantic validity, exists when "persons familiar with the language and texts examine lists of words (or other units) placed in the same category and agree that these words have similar meanings or connotations" (Weber, 1985:21).

Few content analysts can escape sampling decisions because communication materials pervade society (Holsti, 1969:127). Sampling decisions include defining the population, sample size, and types of sampling. The first step in sampling is to define the population, that is, "list all members of the class of documents about which generalizations are to be made" (Holsti, 1969:128). Regarding sample size, many researchers state that sample size varies according to each study and that there is no set answer (Krippendorff, 1980:69; Budd et al., 1967:20; Carney, 1972:139; Holsti, 1969:132). According to Berelson, for most purposes in content analysis,

> [a] small, carefully chosen sample of the relevant sample will produce just as valid results as the analysis of a great deal more - and with the expenditure of much less time and effort (cited in Budd et al., 1967:20).

Sample sizes that are too small, however, can contribute to large sampling errors (Budd et al., 1967:21).

Various types of sampling procedures exist. For example, stratified random sampling refers to first dividing the sampling population into subgroups (strata) and then drawing a random sample of items from each stratum (Krippendorff, 1980:66). Interval, or systematic sampling "refers to the selection of sample units at specific intervals" (Budd et al., 1967:22). Cluster sampling "uses groups of elements as sampling units" (Krippendorff, 1980:67).

While not a separate sampling procedure in itself, multi-stage sampling is used frequently by content analysts (Krippendorff, 1980:68) and has central importance in content analysis (Budd et al., 1967:23). The stages involved in multi-stage sampling are those of (1) sampling titles, (2) issues, and (3) content (Berelson, 1954:515). The first stage involves selecting which newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and so on to sample. This stage usually involves stratified sampling, in which the population is classified into strata according to certain criteria, such as geographical area, types or presumed audience, editorial position, size or importance, ownership and control, and time of issue (Berelson, 1954:515). Another sampling problem is

determining which issues or dates of the titles to include (Berelson, 1954:515). Once the titles and issues are selected, "there remains the problem of which sections or how much of the relevant content to include" (Berelson, 1954:516). It may be possible to satisfy the study's objectives by analyzing only half of the content (Berelson, 1954:516), but many content analyses simply avoid the problem of sampling content by coding all the relevant material published (Budd et al., 1967:28).

Advantages of Content Analysis

Weber notes that compared with other data-gathering and analysis techniques, content analysis has several advantages (1985:10). For example, since content analysis may utilize both quantitative and qualitative approaches, its methodology "combines what are usually thought to be antithetical modes of analysis" (Weber, 1985:10). In addition, content analysis is an unobtrusive technique; neither the sender nor the receiver of the message is aware of being tested or observed (Krippendorff, 1980:29). Hence, "there is little danger that the act of measurement itself will act as a force for change that confounds the data" (Weber, 1985:10). Content analysis can also cope with large volumes of data (Krippendorff, 1980:31) and material that is unstructured, such as biographical material (Krippendorff, 1980:30). Since communications are a central part of social interaction,

"content analytic procedures operate directly upon text or transcripts of human communications" (Weber, 1985:10). Another advantage of content analysis is its ability to obtain information from various documents that exist over long periods of time. As Weber observes, "culture indicators generated from such series of documents constitute reliable data that may span even centuries" (Weber, 1985:10). Because it extends through history, content analysis of text is "an excellent vehicle for
studying long-term changes of attitudes, concerns, and styles" (Stone, 1966:19).

Disadvantages/Limitations of Content Analysis

Content analysis provides a more or less precise description of a document of communication. Berelson (1954:516) notes that there are two points at which a content analysis can go wrong. First, the description of the content may be mistaken as a result of the wrongful application of techniques of analysis (Berelson, 1954:516); and second, content analysis can go wrong "in applying the techniques of interpretation or inference to the correct content description" (Berelson, 1954:516). In most studies in which the description of content itself is the primary objective, there is no real problem of inference. Other than the problems of reliability and validity mentioned earlier, and problems of inference, content analysis is "suitable for

testing a number of hypotheses" (Stone, 1966:19).

D. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This thesis will test the following four hypotheses. First, it is hypothesized that the amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature has increased. The second research question hypothesizes that articles about remarried family life in popular literature have become more instructional. The third hypothesis proposes that articles in popular literature identify problems that researchers and clinicians identify as most common to remarried families. The final hypothesis is that the evaluation of remarried family life has become more instructional over time.

In order to ascertain whether remarriage is in the process of becoming institutionalized, researchers need to discover what norms are emerging concerning remarriage and how they emerge (Cherlin, 1978:647). Cherlin suggests that content analyses of literature may be illuminating in such an endeavor (1978:647). The amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular magazines and academic journals has increased substantially (Bernard, 1956:37; Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985) and "discussion groups, adult education courses, newsletters, and self-help books for remarried parents have proliferated" (Cherlin, 1978:647). As Cherlin notes,

> [w]hether these developments are central to the institutionalization of remarriage remains to be seen, but they represent possible sources of information about institutionalization which should be monitored (1978:647-648).

Magazine articles on remarried families may help members of such families to deal with their problems and aid them in establishing norms with which to conduct their everyday lives.

If the mass media do in fact reflect social trends, then the relatively frequent appearance of a particular social topic may reflect evidence of a societal need. In order to test the "media as reflectors of culture hypothesis, it is hypothesized that as the number of remarried families increases, the amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature increases.

> **Hypothesis #1:** The amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature has increased.

Most adults typically learn how to raise children through participant learning, "which occurs as children grow up in families and interact with their own parents" (Lagoni and Cook, 1985:521). Within remarried families, however, the same role-learning opportunities are ordinarily not available to the stepparent. As Lagoni and Cook point out, "in the absence of traditional role models, stepparents may turn to the popular media for information" (1985:521). Indeed, the media's significance in disseminating advice on childrearing and family life in general has increased substantially over the past five decades (Geboy, 1981:205). In 1963, Winch contended that "mass media advice had replaced the traditional

family resources of wisdom concerning effective parenting" (cited in Lagoni and Cook, 1985:521). Results from a study by Geboy on parent's perceptions of the value of child care publications indicate that over three-fourths of the respondents who claimed to have read child care materials believed them to be useful, and more than half "said that their behavior toward their children had changed as a result of what they had read" (1981:208). Family professionals have begun to "recognize the educational potential of using popular magazines and books for disseminating the most recent developments in family knowledge for the lay public" (Robinson, 1982:369). It is thus hypothesized that articles have become more instructional.

Hypothesis #2: Articles about remarried family life in popular literature have become more instructional.

Clearly, parental use of popular literature for child care instruction is a widespread phenomenon (Winch, 1963:463; Geboy, 1981), and it follows that remarried family members, particularly stepparents, would also make use of popular magazines "as a way to learn about their new, unfamiliar roles" (Lagoni and Cook, 1985:522). It is therefore hypothesized that articles in popular literature will identify problems that researchers and clinicians identify as most common to remarried families.

Hypothesis #3: Articles in popular literature identify problems that researchers and clinicians identify as most common to remarried families.

If the articles in forms of popular literature do in fact

identify problems that both researchers and clinicians identify as most common to remarried families, then the evaluation of remarried family life should become more positive over time.

> **Hypothesis #4:** The evaluation of remarried family life in popular literature has become more positive over time.

This hypothesis is based on researchers' decreasing reliance on the deficit-family model. While 43% of research used this framework since 1980 (Ganong and Coleman, 1987:106), prior to 1970, "86% of the studies on stepchildren were based at least partly on the deficit-comparison model" (Ganong and Coleman, 1987:106). In addition, if the frequency of articles on remarried families has increased, then some members of society should be more aware than an alternate family structure is rapidly emerging. Such awareness may result in more tolerant and positive attitudes toward remarried families, and such attitudes may be reflected in popular literature content.

E. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Two content analyses of popular literature articles on remarried family life have been performed (Lagoni and Cook, 1985; Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985). Lagoni and Cook (1985) conducted a content analysis of 30 articles found in five magazines which were shown to have the highest proportions of parenting articles. Their hypothesis was that "the incidence of stepparenting articles in leading parenting

magazines would increase from 1961 to 1982" (Lagoni and Cook, 1985:222). Although this hypothesis was not supported, the authors concluded that "popular magazines do seem to be reflecting the quantity and content of the professional literature" (Lagoni and Cook, 1985:525).

Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman's content analysis (1985), however, found that the number of articles on remarriage and stepparenting has increased appreciably from 1940 to 1980. Rather than relying only on leading parenting magazines to support their hypothesis that popular literature on remarried families has kept pace with increasing divorce and remarriage rates, they examined all articles published on remarriage over a period of 40 years. The main criticism of their methodology is that they included all articles located in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature that fell under the heading of "remarriage." Many of the articles cited under "remarriage" do not concern remarried family life per se, but rather refer to the demographics of remarriage, and the issue of religion, divorce, and remarriage (for example, out of a total of 105 articles cited under the heading "remarriage" in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature from 1968-1991[June], 11 articles, or 10.5% were concerned solely with religious law or doctrine). As a result of including all articles located under "remarriage," Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman's "miscellaneous" sub-category under the content category of major problems associated with remarriage comprised 20.1% of

the material coded for the 1970s period. Although a 'miscellaneous' category is both necessary and desirable (Budd et al., 1967:44), it must be used with discretion and "should only account for a small percentage of all the material analyzed" (Budd et al., 1967:44). By including only articles cited under "remarriage" (in addition to other more specific key words used) that referred to remarried family life, Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman would have decreased the size of their miscellaneous category and thereby increased the size of the "problem areas" categories. Researchers would then have a more accurate presentation of the problems that magazine articles identified.

F. RESEARCH DESIGN

Sample

The hypotheses stated earlier will be tested through a content analysis of popular magazine articles published during the years 1961-1990. Magazines were chosen because "it seems reasonable to assume that articles of advice in ... magazines are read by more people than are books" (Winch, 1963:448). The sample of articles chosen are all articles cited in the issues of the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature and the Canadian Periodical Index (English magazines only) published between 1961 and 1990. The following seven key words were used to search the listings: "blended family," "reconstituted family," "stepchildren" (or any derivative thereof),

"stepparent" (or any derivative thereof), and "remarriage," "divorce and children," and "family." Each article listed under the heading "remarriage" was checked for relevance to remarried family life and only those articles which were germane to remarried family life were included. The literature search conducted in the above manner yielded a total of 177 articles (162 titles were identified in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature and the Canadian Periodical Index identified 15 articles). The articles came from a total of 48 different magazines (see Appendix A for a list of the magazines and the number of articles that each magazine contributed). The starting time of 1961 was chosen to allow for comparison between the periods of pre-liberalization and post-liberalization of divorce laws. The first liberalization of divorce legislation occurred in 1968 in Canada and 1970 for the United States. As a result, the number of divorces increased phenomenally, thus increasing the pool of eligibles for remarriage. A second major liberalization of divorce laws occurred in 1985 in Canada, which introduced the "no fault" divorce (although legislation did not take effect until 1986). 1990 was chosen as the closing date of the literature search because it marks the end of a thirty year period.

Coding Scheme

The first hypothesis will be tested through a frequency

count of all articles on remarried families published between 1961 and 1990. In order to ascertain whether the number of articles has significantly increased, the percent increase will be calculated for specific time intervals. Hypotheses #2, #3, and #4 will be tested through a content analysis of the magazine articles. The unit of analysis is the entire magazine article. To assess the content of articles that will be reviewed, six major categories were developed, all of which include sub-classifications that are dichotomous variables (see Appendix B for an example of the coding scheme and Appendix C for definitions of categories and subcategories). The first category deals with the content or subject matter of the articles and is comprised of seven sub-categories: (a) stepparent-stepchild interaction, (b) ambiguity of parental roles, (c) finances and legalities, (d) sibling and stepsibling relations, (e) kin relations, (f) abuse, and (g) miscellaneous. These subcategories were largely based on Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman's (1985) and Lagoni and Cook's (1985) coding schemes used in their content analyses of popular articles on remarried family life. Their coding schemes for the content of articles were "predetermined from the empirical and clinical literature on the topic" (Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:529) and based on major adjustment problems that remarried family members face (Lagoni and Cook, 1985:522).

CATEGORY ONE - CONTENT

Within each of these seven problem areas, a variety of specific problems were coded. The material will be coded for the content category according to whether or not the article identifies the areas that are problematic for remarried family members. The frequency of the appearance of the attributes within the problem areas will also be coded. Frequency will be calculated according to the number of paragraphs a particular attribute (for example, discipline) appears in. For the first sub-category, **stepparent-stepchild interaction**, four specific problems were identified: discipline, communication with child concerning emotions, losses, and bonding processes, and loyalty conflicts between parent and child or stepparent and stepchild, and acceptance of the new situation. The second sub-category, **ambiguity of parental roles**, deals with six main problems: the stepparent's lack of prior parenting experience, the absence of role models, stepparent versus natural parent roles, the stepparent image, including the stepparent's self-image, esteem, their public image, and stereotypes, stepparent's feeling excluded from family interaction, and children's rejections of stepparent's attempts to "parent" or bond with the child. In the third sub-category, **finances and legalities**, three problem areas were identified: the earning and sharing of monies in the remarried family household, support money for the former spouse and children from a previous union, and the legal

rights of stepparents including adoption, guardianship, custody, and financial support. Problems noted under the fourth sub-category, **sibling and stepsibling relations** are: concerns regarding the adjustment and interaction between stepsiblings, loyalty conflicts, and concerns regarding "turf" and possessions. The fifth sub-category, **kinship relations**, includes three problems: acceptance from new kin, disapproval or interference from "old" and "new" kin, and the lack of appropriate kinship terminology. The sixth subcategory, **abuse**, is comprised of: abuse between spouses, abuse between parent and child, and incest. The final sub-category, **miscellaneous**, includes a wide range of specific problems not appropriate for inclusion in any of the other categories: friends, learning to love again, careers, remarriage readiness, mate selection, unexpected complexity of the lifestyle, and religious law or doctrine (adapted from Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:529).

CATEGORY TWO - INSTRUCTIONAL

The second category deals with whether the article is **instructional**. It includes four sub-classifications, which are based upon Rosenblatt and Phillip's (1975) identification of the commendable aspects of family articles in magazines. The first sub-classification is the identification of problems - does the article describe problems in ways that help readers to see aspects of their lives in a new perspective? The second sub-classification, encouragement to deal with

problems, refers to whether or not the article encourages its readers to believe that they can change their lives. Importance of dealing with problems is the third sub-classification and pertains to whether or not the article points out that if one does not deal with a problem, then the result may be an accumulation of tension, depression, anger, or hostility. The fourth sub-classification is the availability of professional help - does the article directly or indirectly indicate that professional help is available, such as counselling and the broad spectrum of assistance available through family service agencies?

CATEGORY THREE - CONTENT SOURCE

The third category, **content source**, describes the basis from which the material in the article was taken and is based upon Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman's (1985:528-529) classification. An article is coded as (a) personal experience/advice if the discussion is limited to the personal experience of the author and offers no information from empirical sources. If a professional (e.g., M.D., social worker, psychologist, sociologist) discusses experiences with members of remarried families, then the article is coded as (b) professional experience/advice. Articles may also be coded as (c) combination of (a) and (b) if a professional not only discussed his/her professional experience but also shared a personal experience (e.g., a therapist who was a stepparent). Articles "whose primary focus was to summarize

current information from empirical sources were labelled (d) empirical" (Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:528). If an article shares personal experience or advice and offers some information from empirical sources, then it is coded as (e) combination of (a) and (d). Articles that share professional experience/advice and information from empirical sources are coded as (f) combination of (b) and (d). Articles that cite both professional and personal experience/advice and share information from empirical sources are coded as (g) combination of (c) and (d). Any article that cannot be classified in the above seven categories will be coded "does not apply."

CATEGORY FOUR - TONE

The tone of the articles is defined as the fourth category and includes six sub-categories, based upon Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman's classification (1985:529). Articles are coded as (a) pessimistic if the content focuses primarily on problems and provides a negative outlook of the remarriage situation. Articles that provide a fairly positive portrait of remarried family life are coded as (b) optimistic. Those that offer an overly positive portrait, "suggesting that everything would work out with a little effort or with enough love and patience" (Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:529) are coded as (c) romantically optimistic. Articles are coded as (d) cautious, warning if they admonished the reader to consider all possible outcomes, to be "careful," and not to

rush into remarriage. Articles that are neither positive nor negative but offer information from empirical sources are coded as (e) factual. Articles that lack such information and are neither positive nor negative are coded (f) neutral.

CATEGORY FIVE - AUDIENCE

A list of all magazines in which the articles appeared was made. In order to determine to whom the magazine articles are directed, a fifth category, **audience** is used. The audience category is comprised of six sub-classifications, based upon Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman's (1985) typology. These sub-categories are: (a) general - magazines with a broad appeal to both sexes and across ages; (b) women: mainstream - magazines that primarily appeal to women; (c) women: feminist - magazines that primarily appeal to a feminist ideology; (d) men - those that appeal to men; (e) aged - those that appeal to older, retired persons; and (f) youth - magazines that appeal to adolescents.

CATEGORY SIX - LENGTH

The length of each article is measured according to certain guidelines. The standard for measuring page size is the letter-sized page (8.5 inches by 11 inches). Each page is then divided into quartiles. Each quartile of a page that is filled is counted for length. For example, if two quartiles of one page are devoted to the article in question, then it is counted as one-half of a page. Illustrations are not counted as part of the length of an article unless they comprise a

whole page, in which case they are counted as one-quarter of a page. For articles printed on legal-sized paper that measures 14 inches by 8.5 inches (such as early editions of the Ladies Home Journal), each page counts as 1.5 pages (and is therefore split into six quartiles), and the length of the article is calculated according to the rules used for measuring letter-sized articles (that is, if five out of six quartiles are filled on a legal-sized page, then that page counts as 1.25 pages). Articles are coded as short if they are one page or less, moderate if they are more than one page but less than three pages long, and long if they are more than three pages.

Reliability

The types of reliability sought will be intercoder and intracoder reliability. The articles will be arranged according to the date in which they were published, starting from 1961 to 1990. Ten articles will be randomly chosen from this arrangement. The researcher and another coder will independently read this sample and analyze the content according to the specific categories. Intercoder reliability will be assessed through the consistency achieved between both coders. To test for intracoder reliability, the researcher will code the ten articles at two different times. Intracoder reliability will be assessed according to the percent agreement between the results.

Intercoder reliability was sought in order to "test the clarity of instructions and definitions and the ability of coders to follow instructions and comprehend definitions" (Budd et al., 1967:67). The author and another reviewer read a random sample of ten articles to assess intercoder reliability and to determine the appropriateness of the categories. Some sub-categorical definitions were refined as a result of the initial testing of the coding scheme. Intercoder reliability was measured using Holsti's formula (cited in Budd, et al., 1967:68): R=2(C1,2)/C1+C2, where C1,2 is the number of category assignments both coders agree on, and C1+C2 is the total assignments made by both coders (the total number of possible responses for each article is 37).[1] Intercoder reliability was calculated to be .86 for the ten articles. The correlations between the individual codings ranged from .76 to .95.

Intracoder reliability was sought to measure the consistency of the researcher's comprehension and application of the categorical definitions to the coding scheme. To assess intracoder reliability, the author coded the sample at two different times (where Time 2 was two weeks later than Time 1) and calculated the reliability according to the

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[1]The audience category was excluded; while the placement or omission of attributes in other categories depends upon the subjective interpretation of the reader(s), each magazine, through readership surveys and content, assesses its own audience identification (Taft, 1982; Nourie and Nourie, 1990), and the audience category will therefore be coded according to each magazine's audience identification.

formula presented above (where C1,2 is the number of category assignments that the single coder agreed on at two different coding sessions). Intracoder reliability was assessed to be .95, with correlations between individual codings ranging from .89 to 1.00.

G. CONCLUSION

Three perspectives regarding the effects of the mass media exist: the media as reinforcers of the existing social structure, the media as reflectors of culture, and the media as agents of social change. Although disagreement exists among communication scholars regarding the effects of the mass media upon individuals and society, researchers can use content analysis to test any of these three positions. This chapter proposes that the media act as lagging mirrors of social trends. The prevalence of remarriage after divorce is a relatively new trend, and it is hypothesized that this trend is reflected in media content, particularly magazine articles.

Content analysis is an unobtrusive research technique that can be used to measure social change over time. To discover whether remarriage is in the process of becoming institutionalized, researchers can analyze the content of popular literature in order to ascertain whether the amount of attention paid to remarried families has kept pace with their increasing numbers; whether this content reflects the content

of academic articles and books; whether this content has become more instructional over time; and whether changes in the evaluation of remarried family life have occurred.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter tests the hypotheses defined in chapter four. The results of the content analysis are analyzed. The audience category is first examined in order to discover to whom most popular literature content is directed, and then the length category is presented. Each of the hypotheses will then be analyzed separately according to the order in which they were previously presented. Hypothesis I is tested with a frequency count of relevant articles published in popular literature from 1961-1990. Hypothesis II corresponds to the instructional category. The third hypothesis is tested through the content and source categories. The tone category is used to test hypothesis IV. A discussion of the results follows the presentation of the data.

A. AUDIENCE CATEGORY

As Table 1 indicates, the majority of articles on remarried families published in the popular literature from 1961-1990 were directed to either general audiences or to women specifically. No articles were published in women's magazines that had a feminist approach in the 1960s. The creation of a feminist magazine, Ms, in 1972, however, resulted in a small percentage of articles on remarried families directed to women with a feminist perspective. From 1961-1990, a small but steady proportion of articles appeared

with specialized appeal to adolescents. No articles appealed to older or retired individuals prior to 1981, and only one such article was published from 1981-1990. This finding is likely due to the fact that by retirement age, children have most often left their parent's homes, and if a remarriage occurs, then there is less adjustment required on the part of the spouses and the children. Since most resident stepparents are stepfathers, it was surprising to find that no articles were found published in magazines whose primary audience is male. Several of the articles (19, or 11%) reviewed, however, were written by stepfathers directly for other stepfathers.

B. LENGTH CATEGORY

Across the three time periods, the majority of articles published on remarried families were moderate in length (that is, more than one page, but less than three pages). The proportion of short articles (less than one page) increased over time. The percentage of long articles (more than three pages) decreased from 31.6% during 1961-1970 to only 10.7% from 1981-1990. The decrease in long articles and increase in short articles may be due to a trend toward shorter articles in general in order to sell more advertising space. Today, publishers depend on advertising for a greater part of their revenue than that generated from circulation (Wood, 1971:304; Taft, 1982:25). Magazine advertising rates have "increased at a much slower rate than those for other media, especially

television" (Taft, 1982:40), thus magazines are an economically viable resource for advertisers. From 1970 to 1980, the amount of magazine advertising revenues more than doubled (Taft, 1982:327). Part of this increase may be due to the rising costs of advertising, but it may also be that an increase in the amount of advertising in magazines has occurred.

Table 1
Number and Percent of Articles by Type of Publication Audience and Length, 1961-1990.

Audience Category	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. General	5	26.3	14	34.1	48	42.9
B. Women - mainstream	13	68.4	24	58.5	51	45.5
C. Women - feminist	0	-	1	2.4	7	6.3
D. Men	0	-	0	-	0	-
E. Aged	0	-	0	-	1	0.9
F. Youth	1	5.3	2	4.9	5	4.5
Length Category						
A. Short	3	15.8	9	22.0	35	31.3
B. Moderate	10	52.6	26	63.4	65	58.0
C. Long	6	31.6	6	14.6	12	10.7
Total Articles	19	100.0	41	100.0	112	100.0

C. FREQUENCY

Across the three decades, 1961-1990, a total of 177[1] articles on remarried families in popular literature were published. Of these 177 articles, 22 were published from 1961-1970, 41 from 1971-1980, and 114 from 1981-1990. These figures confirm that the number of articles on remarried families published in popular literature has increased appreciably from 1961-1990. There was an 86% increase in the number of articles published on this topic between 1961-1970 and 1971-1980; a 178% increase occurred from 1971-1980 to 1981-1990; and the total percent increase in the number of articles published from the first period (1961-1970) to the last (1981-1990) was 418%.

D. INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

Table 2 presents the results of the instructional category (note: the percentages do not equal 100.0 because most articles addressed more than one classification). From 1961-1970, 47.4% of the articles identified problems in ways that helped readers to see aspects of their lives in a new perspective. During the 1971-1980 period, it increased to 61.0% and dropped to 53.6% from 1981-1990. The appearance of the other three subcategories within the instructional

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[1]Although 177 relevant articles on remarried families were published from 1961-1990, five could not be located or were unavailable. The total number of articles used in the content analysis, therefore, is 172; a total of 158 American and 14 Canadian articles were used.

category increased across the three time periods. The number of articles that encouraged their readers to deal with problems increased from 21.1% to 31.7% to 42% across the three time periods, an approximately 30 to 50% increase per decade.

Table 2
Number and Percent of Articles by Instructional Category, 1961-1990.

Instruction Category	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Identification of Problems	9	47.4	25	61.0	60	53.6
B. Encouragement to deal with problems	4	21.1	13	31.7	47	42.0
C. Importance of dealing with problems	2	10.5	7	17.1	21	18.8
D. Availability of professional help	3	15.8	11	26.8	33	29.5
Total Articles	19		41		112	

The "importance of dealing with problems" was the least emphasized subcategory among the instructional materials. The number of articles that stressed the importance of dealing with problems did increase though from 10.5% during 1961-1970 to 17.1% for the 1971-1980 period, and increased slightly from 1981-1990. It appears, however, that encouragement to deal

with problems is deemed more important by popular literature authors than the importance of dealing with problems, since almost twice as many articles across the thirty-year period emphasized the former. The number of articles that indirectly or directly indicated that professional help is available increased substantially from the first to the last period, from 15.8% to 29.5%.

E. CONTENT SOURCE CATEGORY

As Table 3 indicates, across the three decades, most articles were reports of personal experience or advice. From 1961-1970, more than half (57.9%) of the articles focused on the discussion of personal experience or advice. From 1971-1980, 24.4% did so, while for the third time period, slightly more than one-third (36.6%) used this source. The personal experience/advice articles were predominantly a stepparent sharing his or her own life experience, and focused on the 'trials and tribulations' of being a stepparent. Some of the articles with a personal experience/advice content source were written by stepchildren who related their problems and techniques of adjustment to readers. Usually the personal experience/advice articles were accompanied by some degree of advice giving to the reader with the intent of identifying problems and assisting the reader in avoiding these problems.

Table 3
Number and Percent of Articles by Content Source, 1961-1990.

Content Source Category	1961-1970		1971-1980		1981-1990	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
A. Personal	11	57.9	10	24.4	41	36.6
B. Professional	1	5.3	13	31.7	26	23.2
C. A and B	5	26.3	8	19.5	30	26.9
D. Empirical	0	-	4	9.6	10	8.9
E. A and D	0	-	0	-	0	-
F. B and D	2	10.5	4	9.6	0	-
G. C and D	0	-	2	4.8	5	4.5
H. Does not apply	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total Articles	19	100.0	41	100.0	112	100.0

Only 5.3% of the articles from 1961-1970 focused on professional experience/advice. From 1971-1980, however, more articles used this source (31.7%) than the personal experience/advice content source. Almost one-third of the articles published between 1971-1980 were reports of professionals' (such as therapists, psychologists, medical doctors, and social workers) experiences with members of remarried families or interviews with professionals. There was a decrease in the use of the professional experience/advice source from the period 1971-1980 to the 1981-1990 period, but 23.2% of the articles still used this content source from 1981-1990.

The combination of professional and personal

experience/advice comprised one-quarter of the articles across the three decades. Although there was a small decrease in the percent of articles using this source from 1971-1980 (19.5%), the percent was fairly constant for the first and third time periods. The combination of professional and personal experience/advice articles were divided between those where a professional who is also a stepparent shares a personal experience and discusses professional experience/advice and articles that give personal experience/advice and cite professional experience/advice.

The citation of empirical sources in popular literature peaked during the 1971-1980 period, when 24% of the articles cited empirical sources. During this time, almost 10% of the articles cited only empirical sources, approximately 10% shared professional experience/advice and offered some information from empirical sources, and 4.8% shared professional and personal experience/advice and information from empirical sources. From 1981-1990, the percentage of articles citing empirical sources declined in that only 13.4% offered information from empirical sources. It appears that the trend has been to offer readers a practical guide to deal with common problems by publishing more professional and personal experience/advice articles rather than to summarize current information from empirical sources.

F. CONTENT CATEGORY - OVERALL TRENDS

Table 4 presents the content or problem areas discussed in the popular literature. They are classified according to the seven major content categories identified earlier.

Table 4
Number and Percent of Major Problems/Areas Noted in Popular Articles, 1961-1990.

Content Categories	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Stepparent - Stepchild Interaction	33	36.3	80	35.7	158	37.9
B. Ambiguity of Parental Roles	27	29.7	74	33.0	120	28.8
C. Finances and Legalities	6	6.6	15	6.7	46	11.0
D. Sibling and Stepsibling Relations	8	8.8	17	7.6	35	8.4
E. Kinship Relations	6	6.6	15	6.7	24	5.8
F. Abuse	0	-	1	0.4	8	1.9
G. Miscellaneous	11	12.1	22	9.8	26	6.2
Total Problems	91	100.0	224	100.0	417	100.0
Total Articles	19		41		112	

The data show that between 1961 and 1990, the primary concern expressed in the articles was the nature of interaction between stepparent and stepchild or parent and child. This

focus remained fairly constant across the three time periods, from 36.3% in the 1961-1970 period, 35.7% from 1971-1980, and slightly increasing to 37.9% during the 1981-1990 period. The discussion of problems related to the ambiguity of parental roles also assumed a constant but fairly prominent position across the three time periods. The citation of both stepsibling and sibling relations and kinship relations as problematic in the literature remained fairly stable over time.

Three of the major problem areas showed change over time. The discussion of finances and legalities remained constant for the first two time periods (6.6% and 6.7%, respectively), but increased to 11% for the 1981-1990 period. The percent of articles that focused on abuse gradually increased over time. From 1961-1970, no article made reference to abuse as a problem in stepfamilies. Only one of the forty-one articles published during 1971-1980 (0.4%) mentioned abuse as a problem. Although the percent remained low for the 1981-1990 period (1.9%), it was a substantial increase compared to the two prior time periods. There was a decrease in the discussion of problems classified as "miscellaneous." This category included specific problems that were not appropriate for inclusion in the other six major problem areas, such as remarriage readiness, unexpected complexity of the lifestyle, and religious law or doctrine. There was an approximately 50% decrease in the citation of such problems from the periods

1961-1970 to 1981-1990.

Category A[2]

Looking more closely at the problem area that generated the most interest, stepparent-stepchild or parent-child interaction, most problems did not increase or decrease significantly over thirty years, although the subcategory of "loyalty conflicts" was cited as the most common source of stepparent/parent-child problems in popular literature from 1961-1990. Most often loyalty conflicts occur when the child feels betrayed or 'left out' because of the new spouse's and the natural parent's attention to each other. Occasionally, loyalty conflicts result from the child liking the stepparent more than the non-custodial natural parent. As Table 5 indicates, the discussion of loyalty conflicts remained fairly constant throughout the three decades (30.3% during the 1961-1970 period, 32.5% from 1971-1980, and 31.6% from 1981-1990).

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[2]Although the researcher performed a frequency count of the number of paragraphs that each attribute (within the major problem areas) appeared in during the coding process, these results are not presented. The frequency count did not prove to be useful in indicating the amount of attention paid to the particular attributes within the article. For example, the results of the frequency count for attributes within category A indicate that the attribute "discipline" appeared in ten articles during the 1961-1990 period, and was cited in 19 paragraphs. This means that discipline appeared in approximately 1.9 paragraphs per article. From 1971-1980 it appeared in 1.3 paragraphs, and 1.5 paragraphs from 1981-1990. The frequency count used in this study was not precise enough to accurately measure the degree of concentration each article gave to the attributes in question nor to assess whether the degree of concentration changed over time. Instead, coding the presence of each attribute yielded more meaningful results.

Table 5
Number and Percent of Specific Problems Noted in Popular Area of Stepparent-Stepchild Interaction, 1961-1990.

Category A	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A.Discipline	10	30.3	18	22.5	40	25.3
B.Communication	3	9.1	13	16.3	25	15.8
C.Loyalty conflicts	10	30.3	26	32.5	50	31.6
D.Acceptance of situation	10	30.3	23	28.7	43	27.2
Total Problems	33	100.0	80	100.0	158	100.0

The subcategory "communication with child" as a problem increased in frequency from the first period (9.1%) to the second period (16.3%) and remained fairly stable during the 1980s (15.8%). Discipline appeared to be as problematic as loyalty conflicts from 1961-1970, but it decreased as being cited as problematic from 30.3% to 22.5% during 1971-1980, and rose only slightly to 25.3% during the 1981-1990 period. "Acceptance of the situation" remained fairly constant as a focus of interest across the three time periods. It appears that both stepparents and stepchildren experienced initial difficulty coming to terms with their new family structure. For children, the stepparent reinforced the finality of their parent's divorce and any fantasies that they might reunite were shattered. For stepparents, children who were once endearing became hostile when their parent remarried and the steppparent became a part of the household.

Category B

For the problem area ambiguity of parental roles, the data in Table 6 suggest that certain aspects of this problem are perceived as being more troublesome than others. For example, across the three time periods, the subcategory "stepparent versus natural parent roles" was consistently mentioned more than the other subcategories. Confusion between the spouses or for one spouse regarding appropriate role behavior was a chief area of difficulty referred to in popular literature from 1961-1990 (33.3% during the 1961-1970 period, 39.2% from 1971-1980, and 29.2% for the last time period). While the stepparent's image, including the negative stereotypes perpetuated by fairy tales, was not perceived as being overly problematic from 1961-1970, it increasingly came to be viewed as a source of difficulty throughout the years. Approximately 24% of the problems associated with the ambiguity of parental roles cited between 1981-1990 expressed discontent with the stepparent image, or referred to its negative connotations. Another notable increase occurred in the percentage of articles that indicated that the absence of role models was a problem. From 1961-1970, only 3.7% of the problems mentioned the absence of role models as distressing, whereas from 1971-1980, 13.5% did so, and by the 1981-1990 period, 16.7% did.

Table 6
Number and Percent of Specific Problems Noted in Popular Area of Ambiguity of Parental Roles, 1961-1990.

Category B	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A.Stepparent lack of prior experience	4	14.8	7	9.5	12	10.0
B.Absence of role models	1	3.7	10	13.5	20	16.7
C.Stepparent vs. natural parent roles	9	33.3	29	39.2	35	29.2
D.Stepparent image	4	14.8	14	18.9	29	24.2
E.Stepparent feeling excluded	0	-	3	4.1	2	1.7
F.Children's rejection of stepparent	9	33.3	11	14.9	22	18.3
Total Problems	27	100.0	74	100.0	120	100.0

Some problems did appear to decrease in significance over time. From 1961-1970, 33.3% of the problems lamented that children rejected the stepparent's attempts to 'parent' or bond with them. Only 14.9% of the total problems associated with the ambiguity of parental roles during the 1971-1980 period cited children's rejection of the stepparent as problematic. A less significant decrease occurred in the subcategory "stepparent's lack of prior parenting experience." While approximately 15% of the problems within this category cited during 1961-1970 identified the lack of prior parenting

experience as a source of confusion, only about 10% did so from 1971-1980 and 1981-1990. One problem was mentioned only after 1970: stepparents feeling excluded from family interaction.

Category C

Within the major problem area of finances and legalities, the subcategory "support money for former spouse and children from a previous marriage" was the most common concern for remarried families cited in popular literature for three decades (see Table 7). It appeared in 50% of the financial and legal problems cited during 1961-1970, increased to 60% during the 1971-1980 period, and decreased to 43.5% for the 1981-1990 period (although it was still the most significant of the financial and legal concerns of the remarried couple during this time). While the "earning and sharing of monies" in the remarried family household was noted as a source of difficulty from 1961-1990 (50%), it appeared to become less problematic across time. One concern that did increase across the three periods was the ambiguity of stepparent's legal rights, including adoption, guardianship, custody, and financial support. Prior to 1971, it was not mentioned as problematic. By the 1981-1990 period, however, it comprised approximately 30% of the financial and legal concerns of remarried families.

Table 7
Number and Percent of Specific Problems Noted in Popular Areas of Finances and Legalities, 1961-1990.

Category C	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Earning & sharing of monies	3	50.0	2	13.3	12	26.1
B. Support money	3	50.0	9	60.0	20	43.5
C. Legal rights	0	-	4	26.7	14	30.4
Total Problems	6	100.0	15	100.0	46	100.0

Category D

For the major problem area sibling and stepsibling relations, "loyalty conflicts" (including sibling rivalry) generated the most parental concern for two of the three time periods (50% from 1961-1970, 41.2% from 1971-1980, and 37.1% for the 1981-1990 period). "Adjustment and interaction between stepsiblings" replaced loyalty conflicts as a major concern for the 1981-1990 period. "Concerns regarding 'turf' and possessions" increased over two decades, peaking at 29.4% for the 1971-1980 period, and decreased during the 1981-1990 period to 20%.

Table 8
Number and Percent of Specific Problems Noted in Popular Area of Sibling and Stepsibling Adjustment, 1961-1990.

Category D	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Adjustment and interaction	3	37.5	5	29.4	15	42.9
B. Loyalty conflicts	4	50.0	7	41.2	13	37.1
C. Concerns re: turf and possessions	1	12.5	5	29.4	7	20.0
Total Problems	8	100.0	17	100.0	35	100.0

Category E

The problem that increased most significantly under the major problem area of kinship relations was the "lack of an appropriate kinship terminology." From 1961-1970, it only comprised 16.7% of problems related to kinship, but by the 1971-1980 period, it accounted for 66.7% of kinship problems. "Disapproval or interference on the part of 'old' and 'new' kin," on the other hand, gradually decreased over the years, from 33.3% in the 1961-1970 period to only 8.3% during 1981-1990. Fifty percent of kinship problems during the 1961-1970 period were attributable to the lack of acceptance from new kin. While this problem decreased during 1971-1980 to account for only 20% of kinship problems, it increased to almost 30% for the 1981-1990 period.

Table 9
Number and Percent of Specific Problems Noted in Popular Area of Kinship Relations, 1961-1990.

Category E	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Acceptance from new kin	3	50.0	3	20.0	7	29.2
B. Disapproval or interference	2	33.3	2	13.3	2	8.3
C. Lack of appropriate terminology	1	16.7	10	66.7	15	62.5
Total Problems	6	100.0	15	100.0	24	100.0

Category F

Abuse was not even mentioned by any articles prior to 1971. For the 1971-1980 period, the one article that was published concerned physical abuse between stepparents and stepchildren. Of the problems cited during 1981-1990 that dealt with abuse, 50% focused on incest. Thirty-seven percent pertained to abuse between a stepparent and stepchild (including physical, emotional/psychological abuse, and neglect). Spouse abuse accounted for only 12.5% of abuse mentioned by the articles.

Table 10
Number and Percent of Specific Problems Noted in Popular Area of Abuse, 1961-1990.

Category F	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Spouse	0	-	0	-	1	12.5
B. Child	0	-	1	100.0	3	37.5
C. Incest	0	-	0	-	4	50.0
Total Problems	0	100.0	1	100.0	8	100.0

Category G

Under miscellaneous, the "unexpected complexity of the remarried lifestyle" was most prominent from 1961-1990 (see Table 11). "Learning to love again" was not noted as a problem in any of the articles published from 1961-1990, and problems associated with friends were mentioned only during the 1971-1980 period. Difficulties associated with jobs and careers remained constant for the 1961-1970 and 1971-1980 periods ((9.1% and 9.1%), but increased to account for 19.2% of all miscellaneous problems from 1981-1990. "Remarriage readiness" was not a source of uncertainty from 1961-1970, but increasingly became so for the latter two decades (22.7% and 19.2%, respectively). "Mate selection" as a focus of interest in popular literature increased slightly during 1971-1980 to 13.6% and decreased from 1981-1990 to 7.7%. From 1961-1970, "multiple marriages" comprised 18.2% of the miscellaneous problems cited in the articles. Multiple marriages decreased as a focus of interest in popular literature from 1971-1980,

and rose slightly to account for 15.4% of the miscellaneous category for the 1981-1990 period. Finally, "religious law or doctrine" comprised 18.2% of miscellaneous problems from 1961-1970, but decreased in significance from 1971-1990.

Table 11
Number and Percent of Specific Problems Noted in Area of Miscellaneous, 1961-1990.

Category G	1961-1970		1971-1980		1981-1990	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
A. Friends	0	-	3	13.6	0	-
B. Learning to love again	0	-	0	-	0	-
C. Jobs and careers	1	9.1	2	9.1	5	19.2
D. Remarriage readiness	0	-	5	22.7	5	19.2
E. Mate selection	1	9.1	3	13.6	2	7.7
F. Unexpected complexity	5	45.5	5	22.7	8	30.8
G. Multiple marriages	2	18.2	3	13.6	4	15.4
H. Religious law or doctrine	2	18.2	1	4.5	2	7.7
Total Problems	11	100.0	22	100.0	26	100.0

G. TONE CATEGORY

As Table 12 indicates, the tone of the articles changed over time. Recognizing that there were only 19 articles published from 1961-1970 (compared to 41 from 1971-1980 and

112 from 1981-1990), most of these articles portrayed an optimistic or romantically optimistic picture of remarried family life. Approximately 37% of the 1961-1970 articles implied to the reader that saying just the right words would magically create a harmonious remarried family and love between the stepparent and stepchild would blossom. About 16% of the articles encouraged the reader to be patient and problems would eventually be resolved. Although only 10.5% of the 1961-1970 articles were pessimistic, a substantial proportion (31.6%) admonished their readers to consider all possible outcomes, to be 'careful,' and not to rush into remarriage.

Table 12
Tone of Popular Articles, 1961-1990.

Tone Category	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Pessimistic	2	10.5	1	2.4	6	5.4
B. Optimistic	3	15.8	16	39.0	63	56.3
C. Romantically Optimistic	7	36.8	4	9.8	13	11.6
D. Cautious, Warning	6	31.6	13	31.7	15	13.4
E. Factual	0	-	4	9.8	8	7.1
F. Neutral	1	5.3	3	7.3	6	5.4
G. Does Not Apply	0	-	0	-	1	0.9
Total Articles	19	100.0	41	100.0	112	100.0

During the 1971-1980 period, the percent of romantically optimistic articles decreased from 37% to 9.8%. While there was no significant change in the percent of articles that cautioned and warned readers, there was a significant decrease in the number of pessimistic articles. Only 2.4% of the 41 1971-1980 articles left the reader with little hope for the survival of the newly formed remarried family. Articles of a factual and neutral tone increased during this period to a total of 17%. The majority of articles, however, were optimistic. Although there was an increase in pessimistic articles from the period 1971-1980 to the 1981-1990 period, they still comprised only 5.4% of the total. The percent of cautious, warning-toned articles decreased significantly to account for only 13.4% of the articles from 1981-1990. The factual and neutral tones also decreased slightly. The number of optimistic articles, however, continued to increase across the three decades, comprising 56.3% of the articles from 1981-1990.

H. DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis, that the amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature has increased, was supported. It would thus appear that the "media as reflectors of culture" hypothesis is correct, since as the number of remarried families has increased over the years, the amount of attention paid to them in popular literature has also

increased. The increase in this amount of attention, however, may also be influenced by two alternative factors. First is the increase in the number of magazines in circulation from 1961 to the present. Perhaps the increase in the number of articles on remarried families in popular literature reflects the fact that the number of magazines available has increased since 1961. To examine the extent of this possibility, the founding dates of all the magazines cited were obtained.[3] Out of the 48 magazines cited, 19 (or 40%) were founded after 1961. This finding would appear to largely account for the increase in articles on remarried families in popular literature from 1961-1990. If, however, one examines the total number of articles contributed by the magazines founded after 1961, then the effect is less significant. Of the 177 articles cited, 23.7% (42) were published by magazines that came into existence after 1961. Of the 162 American articles, 20.9% (34) were published by magazines founded after 1961, while for the 15 Canadian articles, 53.3% (8) were published by magazines founded after 1961. It is clear then that part of the increase in the amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature from 1961-1990 is largely due to the increase in the number of magazines founded after 1961 for the small Canadian sample, but only partly so for the significantly larger American sample.

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[3]Most dates were found in Taft (1980) and Nourie and Nourie (1990); dates for magazines unlisted in these publications were figured out according to the volume numbers of the articles cited.

A more accurate reflection of the increase in the number of articles published in popular literature on remarried families may be obtained by controlling for the 42 articles contributed by the 19 magazines founded after 1961. By omitting these articles from the frequency count of popular literature articles, the contamination effect can be eliminated. In other words, this omission allows one to discover precisely how much of the percent increase in the number of articles published from 1961 to 1990 is due to the growth in the number of magazines in circulation after 1961.

Table 13
Number and Percent of Articles Contributed by the Total Number of Magazines, Magazines Founded Before 1961, and Magazines Founded after 1961, 1961-1990.

Magazines	1961-1970		1971-1980		1981-1990	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	22	100.0	41	100.0	114	100.0
Post 1961	0	-	9	22.0	33	28.9
Pre 1961	22	100.0	32	78.0	81	71.1

As Table 13 indicates, of the 22 articles cited during the 1961-1970 period, none were published by magazines that came into existence after 1961. Nine (22%) of the 42 articles cited from 1971-1980 came from magazines established after 1961, as did 33 (28.9%) of the articles published during 1981-1990.

Controlling for magazines founded after 1961, there is less of a percent increase per decade in the number of articles than that calculated including all articles, but the

increase is still significant. After controlling for articles in magazines founded after 1961, the percent increase in the number of articles published on remarried families between 1961-1970 and 1971-1980 was 45.5%; a 153% increase occurred from 1971-1980 to 1981-1990. The total percent increase in the number of articles published from the first period (1961-1970) to the last period (1981-1990) was 268%.

Another factor that could partially account for the increase in the amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature concerns the editorial policies of magazines. For example, some magazine editors may initiate policies to print more articles on remarried families. To test this possibility, the author chose five American magazines and one Canadian magazine (an approximately 10% sample of the total number of magazines) that published the greatest number of articles on remarried families. The author then examined the editorial page of the first issue for the years 1960, 1970, and 1980 in order to discover whether the editors had inaugurated a policy to publish more articles on remarried families, or on families in general. None of the editorials did so.

The second hypothesis postulated that articles about remarried family life in popular literature have become more instructional, since professionals are increasingly disseminating advice and experience in popular magazines and books. For the most part, this hypothesis was supported.

Almost all of the subcategories increased in appearance over thirty years. The identification of problems assumed the most prominent position among the subcategories for the three periods, although it did decrease slightly during the 1981-1990 period. Perhaps the period 1971-1980 identified more problems than the 1981-1990 period because it was the period immediately following the liberalization of divorce laws in both Canada and the United States, when divorce rates increased substantially for the first time. Since most divorced individuals remarry within three years of their divorce (Cherlin, 1981:84; Furstenberg and Spanier, 1987:40), there should have been an increase in the number of remarried families from about 1973 onward for Canada and the United States. In fact, in 1973 in Canada, remarriages accounted for 18.1% of all marriages, compared to 12.3% in 1968 (Statistics Canada, 1978:Table 6) and they continued to increase until 1987, when remarriages comprised 32.6% of all marriages in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1989b: Table 5).

The mass media may have been responding to the increases in divorce and remarriage rates by providing the public with more self-help literature, thus reflecting public needs. The increase in the identification of problems, particularly during the 1971-1980 period, however, may also have been influenced by the "publication of alarmist writing of the changing [North] American family and the rising divorce rate... in the late 1960s and early 1970s" (Pasley and

Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:532). This concern, according to Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, was picked up by the media and "became a popular topic of newspaper journalists and magazine authors" (1985:532).

By the 1980s, almost one-third of the articles indicated that professional help was available for members of remarried families, compared to only about 15% during the 1960s. This may in part be attributable to the increase in the number of professionals who share experience and advice in magazines and consequently recommend seeking professional help. It could also be that seeking professional help has become less stigmatizing than in the past. For many individuals, seeking professional help for relationship or psychological problems was previously "unthinkable, frightening, or somehow a confession of failure or terrible pathology" (Rosenblatt and Phillips, 1975:269). Today, individuals, particularly parents, "rely on the 'experts' for advice ... whatever the endeavor" (Geboy, 1981:209). As a result, as Rosenblatt and Phillips postulate, "sound editorial policy would encourage authors to mention sources of professional help such as the local family service agency" (1975:270).

Over time, readers of popular literature have been provided with more expertise in problem identification and problem solving and more factual information, for example, census data and empirical investigations of remarried family living. It appears that professionals increasingly recognize

the importance of disseminating their research findings in literature that is more accessible to the general public, such as magazines. The expertise represented in articles, however, has continued to be psychologically based (that is, counsellors, psychiatrists, or combinations of expertise, such as sociologists and psychologists). Since these types of individuals are most often referred to in popular literature articles, it is not surprising that problems are prominent in these articles and that the articles continue to offer advice and recommend professional help or therapy. Because popular literature is more dependent on clinical rather than empirical literature, it may not adequately reflect the non-clinical population (Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:533). Many of the articles that do cite professional experience/advice, however, are a combination of professional and personal experience/advice (such as the therapist who is also a stepparent), and may thus be more generalizable to the public.

The problems identified as most prominent in the popular literature reviewed are the same problems reported in the professional literature. Hypothesis III, that articles in popular literature identify problems that researchers and clinicians identify as most common to remarried families, is supported. The most frequent difficulty reported by stepparents in academic studies concerns the relationship between the stepparent and child (Lagoni and Cook, 1985:524; Mills, 1984:365; Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:533; Ganong

and Coleman, 1984:400), and the discussion of this problem area was also predominant in the popular literature over a thirty year period. Problems with discipline, loyalty conflicts, and acceptance of the situation were the most prevalent of the four subcategories and remained fairly constant over thirty years. Only stepparental communication with stepchildren increasingly became viewed as problematic from 1961 to 1990. This may be due to the increase in the emphasis of developing effective intrafamilial communication skills by professionals in recent years (Darling, 1987:829), particularly on talk shows that deal with family problems (Robinson, 1982:375).

The second most frequently discussed problem area in popular literature, ambiguity of parental roles, also figures prominently in empirical research (Duberman, 1975; Lagoni and Cook, 1984:522). Confusion concerning stepparent versus natural parent roles was the most prevalent problem within this major content category. It appears that because of the general absence of a model for remarried family development, remarried families are still attempting to function within a nuclear family ideology, and stepparents continue to complain that there are no clear guidelines regarding appropriate role behavior. In fact, discussion of the absence of role models in popular literature increased across the three time periods more than the other subcategories under ambiguity of parental roles. Perhaps this is evidence that awareness has been

heightened and that rather than continue to operate within an inappropriate nuclear family ideology, stepparents realize that a unique remarried family model that redefines stepparental roles and obligations is necessary. For example, many of the earlier popular literature articles that were "romantically optimistic" personal accounts by stepmothers or stepfathers related the difficulties they experienced as stepparents. Problems appeared to disappear, however, when the child(ren) one day referred to the stepparent as 'mother' or 'father.' It appeared to indicate to the reader that only when the children acknowledged the stepparent in a manner similar to the absent natural parent, could the remarried family become a regular, or 'normal' family, and problems could be overcome. In several of the later articles, however, stepparents abandoned the "myth of instant love" which pervades biological relations. They instead reassured their stepchildren that they did not intend to replace the natural parent, but were rather an "additional" parent.

Part of this difference in acknowledging the natural parent may be due to the circumstances under which the marriage was terminated. In 1961, the majority of remarriage partners in Canada were previously widowed (55.2% compared to 44.8% who were divorced [Statistics Canada, 1978:Table 6]). In most remarriages, therefore, the stepparent physically replaced the deceased natural parent. By 1971, only 33.1% of remarriage partners were previously widowed, compared to 66.9%

who were previously divorced (Statistics Canada, 1978:Table 6), and by 1981, 84% of remarriage partners ended their prior marriages through divorce, compared to only 16% who were widowed (Statistics Canada, 1987:Table 5). Today, most stepparents, therefore, are an addition to and not a replacement of the non-custodial natural parent, who may continue to actively intervene in their children's lives.

According to the empirical research, stepparents cited financial problems only half as often as stepparent-child interaction and ambiguity of parental roles (Lagoni and Cook, 1985:525). Articles in popular literature also addressed money problems less than half as often as they addressed problems with stepparent-child interaction and ambiguity of parental roles. Of the problems comprising the finances and legalities content category, the earning and sharing of monies generally appeared to become less problematic over time. Perhaps the earning and sharing of income in the remarried family household decreased as a source of difficulty because of women's increased participation in the labor force. American census figures indicate that "between 1970 and 1980 alone, the number of women working jumped 58%" (Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman, 1985:533), and for married women, the increase was even more pronounced. In 1986, 58.5% of the American female labor force was married (Eshleman, 1988:130). Similarly, in Canada, 59.1% of married women participated in the labor force in 1986, compared to only 20.8% in 1961

(Baker, 1990:8). By contributing to the remarried family income, women increase their power within the household regarding how money is to be distributed, and less conflict should therefore occur. Also, if a stepfather has to make maintenance payments to a former spouse and children from a previous union, the income of his wife somewhat reduces the pressure to support two families. Although the citation of this problem did decrease from 1961-1970 to 1981-1990, the earning and sharing of monies in the remarried family household still comprised approximately 26% of the financial and legal problems in the 1980s. While wives' employment raises the family income and fosters more independence, it causes problems for some stepmothers who feel that part of their income is supporting their husband's ex-wives and non-resident stepchildren.

Support money for former spouses and children from a previous marriage in fact was a major financial concern throughout the thirty year period. It did decrease by almost 20%, from the 1971-1980 period to the 1981-1990 period. It is surprising, however, that support money was listed as a major financial concern, particularly during the 1971-1980 period for many reasons. First, after the introduction of no-fault divorce legislation in the United States in 1970, alimony or maintenance payments shifted from a "permanent" award to a "transitional" award (Weitzman, 1985:147-148), partly as a result of the increasing economic independence of women

(Weitzman, 1985:164). By 1977, the "median duration of transitional awards was twenty-five months, or about two years" (Weitzman, 1985:165). The added economic burden for stepparents was therefore short-lived. Second, regarding child support payments, as Weitzman reports,

> not one study has found a state or county in which more than one-half of the fathers fully complied with court orders ... [and] between a quarter and a third [of fathers] never make a single court-ordered payment (1985:284).

Similarly, in Canada, one of the most serious problems in the area of family law "has been the failure of parents to comply with court orders or private agreements to pay support" (Morton, 1990:233).

Concern regarding the legal rights of stepparents did increase substantially to account for almost one-third of the financial and legal problems cited from 1981-1990. Whereas in Canada spouses in remarried families are legally responsible for child support, regardless of whether the child is their own (Morton, 1990:230), less than one-third of the American states have adopted the doctrine of <u>in loco parentis</u>, under which a child is legally entitled to support from a stepparent or any other guardian when residing with them (Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley, 1987b:126). The problem of the lack of clear legal rights is echoed in American popular literature.

The major problem areas of <u>sibling and stepsibling relations</u> and <u>kinship relations</u> were not very prominent in the popular literature. Regarding the problems cited under

sibling and stepsibling relations, the articles generally noted that they diminished or altogether disappeared with time. Most articles did not mention kinship relations as a source of difficulty. Of the problems mentioned, acceptance from new kin and disapproval or interference from 'old' or 'new' kin were problems most often cited during the 1961-1970 period, but they decreased in significance over the two remaining time periods. The reason may possibly be that increased geographical mobility results in less opportunities to involve kin in family activities or for kin to interfere. The most significant increase occurred in the number of articles that pointed out the lack of an appropriate kinship terminology. This may be due to an increased awareness on the part of stepparents that they are not replacing the biological parents and therefore may not insist on being called "mother" or "father." In addition, stepchildren who get along with their stepparents may feel that the terms "stepmother" and "stepfather" are derogatory or disrespectful because of the negative stereotypes associated with the prefix "step."

Articles on remarried families in popular literature that deal with abuse were practically nonexistent until the 1980s. Similarly, regarding academic literature, "family violence, as an academic topic of research, remained virtually hidden until the early 1970s" (Steinmetz, 1987:725). It wasn't until 1980 that the popular literature media first published an article on child abuse within remarried families. The publication of

6 articles from 1981-1990 therefore represents a very significant increase. Reports of intrafamilial abuse in general increased throughout the 1970s and 1980s and this was both a cause of greater public awareness due to increases in media reports (Propper, 1984:124) and a stimulus to increases in reporting.

Of the types of abuse mentioned in popular literature, incest, particularly between a stepfather and stepdaughter, and less commonly, between stepsiblings, comprised the largest proportion from 1981-1990. The earliest systematic inquiries into child abuse in academic literature revealed that stepfathers constituted one-third of the perpetrators of sexual abuse, and actually outnumbered natural father abusers (Giles-Sims and Finkelhor, 1984:408). Explanations pertain to weaker normative taboos against incest for non-biological kin and higher stress levels that increase the risk of all types of abuse or deviancy in remarried families (Giles-Sims and Finkelhor, 1984:410). Regarding sexual attraction between stepsiblings, Ihinger-Tallman and Pasley's (1987b:107) study found that only 3.8% of 784 respondents acknowledged it to be a problem. Its occurrence (although infrequent) is attributed to the ambiguity of incest taboos governing stepsibling relationships (Clingempeel, Brand, and Segal, 1987:77).

The final content category, <u>miscellaneous</u>, was included in order to indicate other problems (which are not covered by the previous content categories) that concern remarried

families. The percent of miscellaneous problems noted in popular literature from 1961-1990 gradually decreased. This finding greatly differs from Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman's content analysis (1985), where they reported a substantial increase in the number of miscellaneous problems cited over time. The reason that this author's miscellaneous category decreased rather than increased is due to the selection of articles that were included in the study. Whereas Pasley and Ihinger-Tallman included all articles cited under "remarriage" in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature (in addition to the other headings), this author selected all articles cited under "stepparents" and "stepchildren," and only those cited under the "remarriage" heading that were relevant to remarried families were included. Had all cited articles been coded (a total of 257), the miscellaneous category would definitely have increased.

The predominance of "unexpected complexity of lifestyle" among the miscellaneous problems cited from 1961-1990 may be due to the tendency of recent stepparents to rely on the references for the nuclear family as a model for behavior and expectations. Problems regarding jobs and careers increased for the 1981-1990 period, likely because of the increased participation of women in the labor force. Remarriage readiness increased as a concern for remarried couples in the 1970s and 1980s, probably as a result of researcher's findings that divorce rates for subsequent marriage are even higher

than those for first marriages. The decrease in the significance of religious law or doctrine as a concern to remarried individuals may be due to two factors. First, there were some articles that pertained solely to religious themes regarding remarriage (two from 1961-1970, eleven from 1971-1980, and five from 1981-1990), but were not included because of the selection process noted above. Second, because of the increasing secularization of society (Bibby, 1987), religion has become a less salient issue for many people, and this may be reflected in popular literature (except for publications directed to religiously inclined audiences, for example, Christianity Today, U.S. Catholic, Commonweal, and so on; in fact, all of the articles pertaining to religion and remarriage were published in religious magazines).

The fourth hypothesis, that the evaluation of remarried family life in popular literature has become more positive over time, was supported. The majority of articles from 1981-1990 were optimistic, compared to a minority of articles from 1961-1970. It was hypothesized that an increase in the positive evaluation of remarried life over time would occur as a result of researcher's decreasing reliance on the deficit family model in the 1980s. The increase in optimism, however, could be attributable to more positive evaluations by stepparents (personal experience/advice) and therefore may not be a true reflection of professionals' evaluations.

To test this possibility, separate analyses of the tone

for the content source subcategories of personal experience/advice, professional experience/advice, and combination of personal and professional experience/advice were performed (articles in which professionals also cited empirical sources are included in the professional experience/advice source subcategory; for the "combination of personal and professional experience/advice" source subcategory, articles that also cited empirical sources were included). The results are presented in Tables 14, 15, and 16. As Table 15 indicates, professional accounts did increase in optimism, from 33% during the 1961-1970 period to 48.6% from 1981-1990. The frequency of optimistic articles that were based on personal experience/advice increased over the years, but decreased slightly from the 1971-1980 period to the period 1981-1990.

Table 14
Number and Percent of Personal Articles by Tone, 1961-1990.

Tone	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Pessimistic	1	9.1	0	-	3	7.7
B. Optimistic	1	9.1	5	55.6	17	43.6
C. Romantically Optimistic	7	63.6	1	11.1	13	33.3
D. Cautious, Warning	2	18.2	2	22.2	5	12.8
E. Factual	0	-	0	-	0	-
F. Neutral	0	-	1	11.1	0	-
G. Does not apply	0	-	0	-	1	2.6
Total Articles	11	100.0	9	100.0	39	100.0

Table 15
Number and Percent of Professional Articles by Tone, 1961-1990.

Tone	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Pessimistic	0	-	1	4.5	1	2.9
B. Optimistic	1	33.3	8	36.4	17	48.6
C. Romantically Optimistic	0	-	0	-	0	-
D. Cautious, Warning	2	66.7	7	31.8	7	20.0
E. Factual	0	-	4	18.2	6	17.1
F. Neutral	0	-	2	9.1	4	11.4
G. Does not apply	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total Articles	3	100.0	22	100.0	35	100.0

Table 16
Number and Percent of Combination Personal and Professional Articles by Tone, 1961-1990.

Tone	1961-1970 N	%	1971-1980 N	%	1981-1990 N	%
A. Pessimistic	1	20.0	0	-	1	2.6
B. Optimistic	1	20.0	3	30.0	30	78.9
C. Romantically Optimistic	0	-	3	30.0	0	-
D. Cautious, Warning	2	40.0	4	40.0	3	7.9
E. Factual	0	-	0	-	2	5.3
F. Neutral	1	20.0	0	-	2	5.3
G. Does not apply	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total Articles	5	100.0	10	100.0	38	100.0

The largest increase in optimism occurred in articles in which the content source was a combination of personal and professional experience/advice. It appears that the professional evaluation of remarried family life has become more positive over time, particularly for professionals/ therapists who are also stepparents. Although the popular literature, like much of the academic research on remarried families, has taken a problem-focused approach, from 1981-1990, this literature has maintained a positive or optimistic quality. Hypothesis IV is thus supported.

I. SUMMARY

The amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature has increased substantially from 1961-1990. Popular magazines also seem to be reflecting the quantity and content of the popular literature. The findings of the present study indicate that magazine articles are becoming more instructional and are increasingly encouraging readers to seek professional help. The tone of the articles, whether personal or professional accounts, has become more optimistic. The four hypotheses were therefore supported in this study. Hence, they indirectly indicate that remarriage may be in the process of becoming institutionalized because they denote that some prerequisites of institutionalization may be occurring: need fulfilment, more positive attitudes, and the creation of norms.

6. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

This thesis has been guided by two main objectives. The first objective was to examine Cherlin's hypothesis of the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage. The literature review in Chapter One indicated how the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage negatively affects members of remarried families. Chapter Two outlined the components of social institution theory, and examined the prerequisites that are necessary for institutionalization to occur. Examples of remarriages that follow institutionalized patterns were presented in Chapter Three.

The second objective was to question the relevancy of Cherlin's hypothesis of the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage. The main hypothesis is that remarriage may be in the process of becoming institutionalized. This hypothesis was tested through a content analysis of articles on remarried families published in popular literature from 1961-1990. The four hypotheses which found support indirectly indicate that remarriage may be in the process of becoming institutionalized for many reasons. First, the amount of attention paid to remarried families in popular literature has increased. This indicates evidence of a social need, which is one prerequisite of institutionalization. Second, articles in popular literature about remarried family life have become more instructional, which indicates that norms may be in the

process of being created, another prerequisite of the institutionalization process. Articles in popular literature also identify problems that researchers and clinicians identify as most common to remarried families. Researchers and clinicians recognize the importance of disseminating their research findings and professional experience in literature that is widely available to the general public. As a result, remarried family members are provided with more information and advice on how to solve problems and conduct their everyday lives. Finally, the evaluation of remarried family life in popular literature has become more positive. This could be due to researchers' decreasing reliance on the deficit family model, which indicates that remarried families are considered to be a less deviant family structure now than previously. Attitudes have likely become more tolerant of alternate family forms such as the remarried family, and this may be a result of increased awareness through the media that the number of remarried families is increasing. It may also be that slowly, remarried families are creating norms and consequently, the problems noted in popular and academic literature are being resolved.

The significance of the research presented in this thesis lies in its contribution to increasing the understanding of how the institutionalization of patterns of behavior, specifically remarriage, gradually occurs. In particular, the media institution's role in the process of institutionalizing

remarriage was examined. Communication researchers consider the media institution to be the main cultural institution. It follows, therefore, that the media would be the first institution to reflect changes in other institutions, such as the family. A content analysis of popular literature is thus a useful research technique with which to gauge social change. Magazines were chosen as the data for the content analysis because of their broad appeal and accessibility to the public. They provide informal help-seeking strategies for millions of readers. In other words, the authors of self-help articles generally provide instruction (in that they identify problems and encourage readers to deal with problems and/or seek professional help) and share experiences and advice.

B. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

One limitation of this study concerns the random testing of magazines performed in order to discover whether or not editorial policies had changed. Changes in editorial policy may occur at any time (for example, a change in editor could occur any year or month). Editorial changes could affect the number of articles published that focus on remarried families. A more accurate test, therefore, would be to examine every issue of each magazine throughout the thirty year period analyzed in this thesis. Changes in editorial policies could also be ascertained by contacting individual magazine publishers or editors and requesting information as to the

history of changes in editorial staffing. Because of the large number of magazines that contributed articles, however, the process of checking each issue of every magazine cited from 1961-1990 is beyond the scope of this thesis. It thus remains unknown whether the attention paid to remarried families in popular literature increased in part as a result of editorial policies that encouraged the publication of articles on remarried families.

Another limitation of this analysis may be that an analysis of articles on first marriage and first family problems may reveal similarities in the increase in incidence of such publications and in content (for example, problems in parent-child interaction, sibling interaction, and abuse). In fact, the appearance of childcare and family advice-giving in popular literature has been traced to 1820 (Bigner, 1972:313), and it has been rapidly increasing ever since (Winch, 1963; Geboy, 1981:205). The remarried family, therefore, is not the only family structure that is receiving more attention in popular literature. The amount of attention paid to families in general in popular literature is increasing. What does this increase mean? Is it an indication that like remarried families, first married families may be undergoing a process of institutionalization? There are two main factors that account for the increase in the amount of attention in popular literature paid to families in general. First is the tendency to seek an expert's opinion, whatever the problem may be

(Geboy, 1981:209). Second, as Bigner states, the large body of information available to families through popular literature signifies a "transfer to some degree of a former family function to other agents in society" (1972:318).

It is not that first-married families are incompletely institutionalized and therefore seek guidelines for daily family living. Instead, the amount of attention in popular literature indicates that many different philosophies regarding childcare exist. Although historical surveys reveal that trends in childcare change over time (Bigner, 1972), first-married families, unlike remarried families, nonetheless have many philosophies available from which to choose. For example, parents confront different views on disciplinary styles (such as permissive, authoritarian, or authoritative), but it is clear that both the mother and father have the right to discipline their children. The stepparent, however, may be unsure of his or her right to discipline stepchildren. Whereas most parents consult education materials in an effort to avoid problems (Geboy, 1981:208), stepparents require materials to help them solve existing ones. The fact that many popular literature articles now focus on remarried families may signify that many professionals as well as magazine editors realize the need for advice directed to alternative family structures and that the market for such advice is increasing.

It may appear that the increase in remarried family

problems noted in popular literature (for example, the absence of role models, stepparent image, lack of an appropriate kinship terminology, and abuse) indicates that remarried family life has become less rather than more normative. Problems in popular literature, however, may not be emphasized because they are more prevalent, but rather because there is more awareness that such problems exist and that remarried family members need solutions. If remarried families experience more problems today than thirty years ago, then it would be likely that the tone expressed in popular literature would become more negative. Instead, the citation of problems in popular literature has been accompanied by an increase in optimism and in the amount and type of instruction imparted. Also, the number of romantically optimistic articles has decreased, which indicates that stepparents are viewing their situations more realistically. Before norms can be created, a general awareness of problems associated with the incomplete institutionalization of remarriage is necessary, and this is one of the primary functions of self-help articles in popular literature.

The primary purpose of informal help-seeking strategies is to normalize the experiences of remarried families. The increasing availability of articles on remarried families in popular literature can assist in the "normalization" of remarried family experiences since such publications appeal to a broader audience than do the professional literature.

Articles in popular literature thus aid in the institutionalization of remarriage because they provide a means for remarried families to assess whether their experience is unique or common to remarried families in general. They also provide guidelines and suggest solutions which can assist remarried family members in dealing with problems. Finally, they indicate, through frequency, that families come in a variety of forms, not just the first-married ideal.

C. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are alternate ways of measuring the process of institutionalization. For example, researchers can use attitudinal surveys of the general public to measure the degree of acceptance regarding remarriage and remarried families. Such a study could discover whether or not the general public defines remarried families as part of the family institution. The sample of respondents could then be stratified by age in order to reveal differences in acceptance across generations or age cohorts. It could be hypothesized that disapproval of remarriage and remarried families increases with age. If this hypothesis found support, then it would indicate that among younger generations, remarriage is viewed as a less deviant family structure and that gradually, attitudes are becoming more receptive to remarriage. Correspondingly, attitudes would likely become more tolerant

toward remarried families as these cohorts age.

The prevalence of self-help articles in popular literature indicate what is available to the public. Remarried families have increasingly been provided with information about their experiences in popular literature. The unanswered question is, what are they doing with such information? In other words, what is the effect of self-help literature upon people's attitudes and behaviors? As Rosenblatt and Phillips suggest,

> [i]f there were reliable data on the effects of popularized magazine articles it would be possible for writers and editors to do much more to have a positive impact on individuals, marital relationships, and families (1975:270-71).

Further research on the role of the media in institutionalizing remarriage (or any other pattern of behavior) should address the following kinds of questions: To what extent are members of remarried families altering their attitudes and behaviors as a result of exposure to self-help literature? How many individuals who obtain counselling for remarried family problems have been influenced by an article? Does the dissemination of research findings, and the resulting public awareness of these findings invalidate empirical results? (for example, stepparents who learn of research suggesting that stepparent-stepchild interaction is the greatest source of difficulty in a remarriage may invest greater effort in developing positive relationships with their stepchildren, and thus invalidate the finding). Such analyses

would be useful in increasing the understanding of how institutionalization occurs and on what effect the media has on the institutionalization process.

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Appendix A
List of Magazines

Title	Number of Articles Contributed
Alberta Report*	1
Atlantic	2
Better Homes and Gardens	2
Black Enterprise	1
Business Week	3
Canadian Living*	1
Changing Times	1
Chatelaine*	7
Children Today	2
Coronet	1
Current Health 2	1
Ebony	3
Education Digest	2
Essence	3
Family Health	1
Glamour	2
Good Housekeeping	13
Harper's Bazaar	9
Harpers	1
Health	1
Homemaker's*	1
House and Garden	1
Human Behavior	1

JET	1
Ladies Home Journal	13
McCall's	9
Money	3
Ms	8
New Choices for the Best Years	1
Newsweek	4
New York Times Magazine	8
Omni	1
Parents	19
People	3
Phi Delta Kappan	1
Psychology Today	10
Quest*	1
Redbook	10
Saturday Evening Post	2
Seventeen	5
Teen	3
Today*	1
Today's Parent*	1
U.S.A. Today	1
U.S. Catholic	2
U.S. News and World Report	2
Vogue	2
Your Money*	1

* denotes Canadian magazines

Appendix B

Coding Scheme for Articles

Title _____ Source _____

Total Pages _____

CATEGORIES	*P	**F
I. Content		
A. Stepparent-Stepchild Interaction		
(a) discipline		
(b) communication with child		
(c) loyalty conflicts		
(d) acceptance of the new situation		
B. Ambiguity of Parental Roles		
(a) stepparents lack of prior experience		
(b) absence of role models		
(c) stepparent vs. natural parent roles		
(d) stepparent image		
(e) stepparents feeling excluded		
(f) children's rejection of stepparent		
C. Finances and Legalities		
(a) earning and sharing of monies		
(b) support money for former spouse etc.		
(c) legal rights of stepparents		

*P = presence of attribute
**F = number of paragraphs in which attribute appears

D. Sibling and Stepsibling Relations		
(a) concerns re: adjustment and interaction		
(b) loyalty conflicts		
(c) concerns re: turf and possessions		
E. Kinship Relations		
(a) acceptance from new kin		
(b) disapproval or interference from kin		
(c) lack of appropriate kinship terminology		
F. Abuse		
(a) abuse between spouses		
(b) abuse between parent and child		
(c) incest		
G. Miscellaneous		
(a) friends		
(b) learning to love again		
(c) jobs and careers		
(d) remarriage readiness		
(e) mate selection		
(f) unexpected complexity of lifestyle		
(g) multiple marriages		
(h) religious law or doctrine		

II. Instructional		
(a) identification of problems		
(b) encouragement to deal with problems		
(c) importance of dealing with problems		
(d) availability of professional help		
III. Content Source		
(a) personal experience/advice		
(b) professional experience/advice		
(c) combination of (a) and (b)		
(d) empirical		
(e) combination of (a) and (d)		
(f) combination of (b) and (d)		
IV. Tone		
(a) pessimistic		
(b) optimistic		
(c) romantically optimistic		
(d) cautious, warning		
(e) factual		
(f) neutral		

V. Audience		
(a) general		
(b) women - mainstream		
(c) women - feminist		
(d) men		
(e) aged		
(f) youth		
VI. Length		
(a) short		
(b) moderate		
(c) long		

Appendix C

Definitions for Categorical Attributes

I. CONTENT CATEGORY

A. Stepparent-Stepchild Interaction

(a) discipline - is discipline considered to be problematic for the stepparent? Do stepchildren indicate difficulty in accepting discipline from their stepparent(s)?

(b) communication with child concerning emotions, losses, and bonding process - is this a problem for the stepparent?

(c) loyalty conflicts between parent and child or stepparent and child - does the child feel "left out" or betrayed because of the new spouse and the natural parent's attention to each other? Does the child like the stepparent more than the non-resident natural parent?

(d) acceptance of the situation - is this a problem for the stepparent, child, and/or natural parent? (e.g., does the article indicate that stepchildren harbor fantasies that their parents will reunite?)

B. Ambiguity of Parental Roles

(a) stepparent's lack of prior parenting experience - is this mentioned as a problem and does it result in ambiguity concerning the stepparental role?

(b) absence of role models - is this cited as a problem for the stepparental role?

(c) stepparent versus natural parent roles - is there any confusion between the spouses or for one spouse regarding appropriate role behavior? (e.g., does the stepparent believe that upon creating a blended family he/she should act like a natural parent?)

(d) stepparent image, including stepparent's self-image, esteem, public image, and stereotypes - is this a problem for the stepparent?

(e) stepparents feeling excluded from family interaction - is this a problem for the stepparent? (e.g., he/she is not included in some family activities)

(f) children's rejection of stepparent's attempts to "parent" or bond with the child - is this a problem for the stepparent? (e.g., "you're not my mother/father!")

C. Finances and Legalities

(a) earning and sharing of monies in the remarried family household -does this pose problems for the remarried family?

(b) support money for former spouse and children from a previous marriage - is this a problem in the remarried family household?

(c) legal rights of stepparents, including adoption, guardianship, custody, and financial support - are these problems for the stepparent?

D. Sibling and Stepsibling Relations

(a) concerns regarding adjustment and interaction between stepsiblings - is this a concern of the parents? (also, if cited, specific instances of problematic adjustment and interaction)

(b) loyalty conflicts - between siblings and stepsiblings; includes sibling rivalry.

(c) concerns regarding "turf" and possessions

E. Kinship Relations

(a) acceptance from new kin - is this a problem? (e.g., do new kin treat their natural kin more favorably than the stepkin?)

(b) disapproval or interference on the part of "old" and "new" kin .

(c) lack of an appropriate kinship terminology

F. Abuse

(a) abuse between spouses - emotional/psychological, physical, sexual, neglect.

(b) abuse between parent and child(ren) - emotional/psychological, physical, neglect.

(c) incest - between stepparent and stepchild, or stepsiblings, or closely related stepkin.

G. Miscellaneous - are any of the following cited as problematic with regard to the remarried family or to the remarriage?

(a) friends
(b) learning to love again
(c) jobs and careers
(d) remarriage readiness
(e) mate selection
(f) unexpected complexity of lifestyle
(g) multiple marriages
(h) religious law or doctrine

II. INSTRUCTIONAL CATEGORY

(a) identification of problems - does the article describe problems in ways that help readers to see aspects of their lives in a new perspective?

(b) encouragement to deal with problems - does the article encourage its readers to believe that they can change their lives?

(c) importance of dealing with problems - does the article point out that if one does not deal with a problem, then the result may be an accumulation of tension, depression, anger, or hostility?

(d) availability of professional help - does the article directly or indirectly indicate that professional help is available, such as counselling and the broad spectrum of assistance available through family service agencies?

III. CONTENT SOURCE

(a) personal experience/advice - discussion limited to personal experience of the author and offers no information from empirical sources; or the story of a "friend" with no empirical information.

(b) professional experience/advice - professional (e.g., M.D., social worker, psychologist, sociologist) discusses experiences with members of remarried families; includes interview(s) with professional(s).

(c) combination of (a) and (b) - professional discusses professional experience and shares a personal experience (e.g., a therapist who is also a stepparent; or personal experience with citation of professional experience/advice).

(d) empirical - summarizes current information from empirical sources.

(e) combination of (a) and (d) - shares personal experience/advice and offers some information from empirical sources.

(f) combination of (b) and (d) - shares professional experience/advice and information from empirical sources.

IV. TONE

(a) pessimistic - content focuses primarily on problems and provides a negative outlook of the remarriage situation.

(b) optimistic - content provides a fairly positive portrait of remarried family life.

(c) romantically optimistic - content provides an overly positive portrait, suggesting that everything would work out with a little effort or with enough love or patience.

(d) cautious, warning - content admonishes the reader to consider all possible outcomes, to be "careful," and not to rush into remarriage.

(e) factual - content is neither positive nor negative, but offers information from empirical sources.

(f) neutral - content lacks such information (from empirical sources) and is neither positive nor negative.

V. Audience

(a) general
(b) women - mainstream
(c) women - feminist
(d) men
(e) aged
(f) youth

VI. Length

(a) short - less than one page

(b) moderate - more than one page, but less than three pages.

(c) long - more than three pages.